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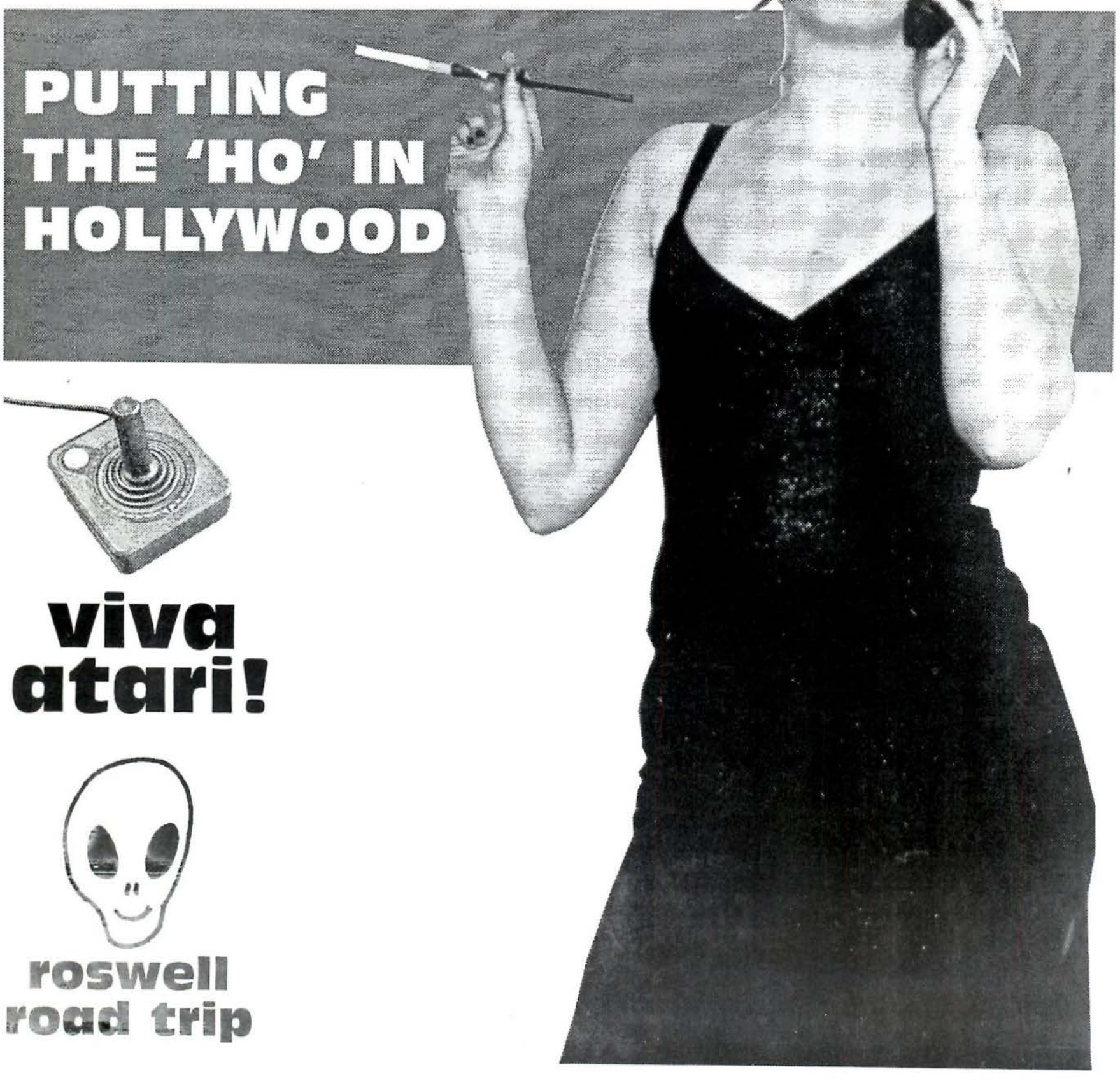
HITCH

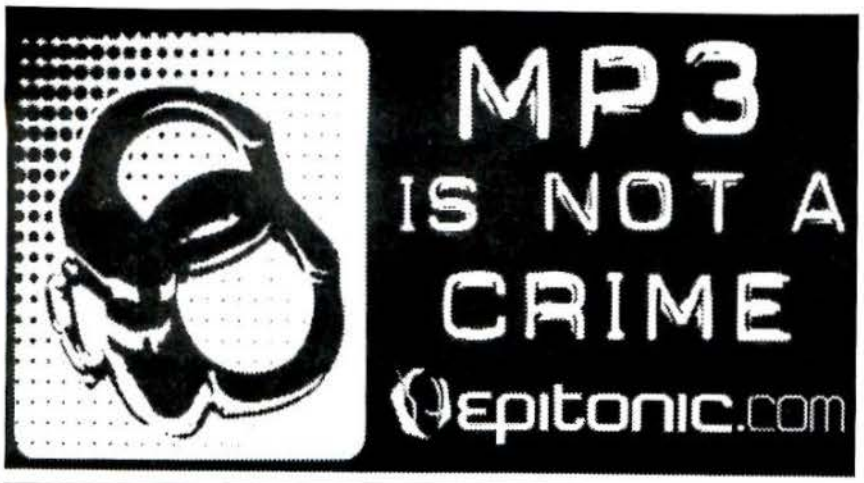
the journal of pop culture absurdity
#23 · $4
summer 2000

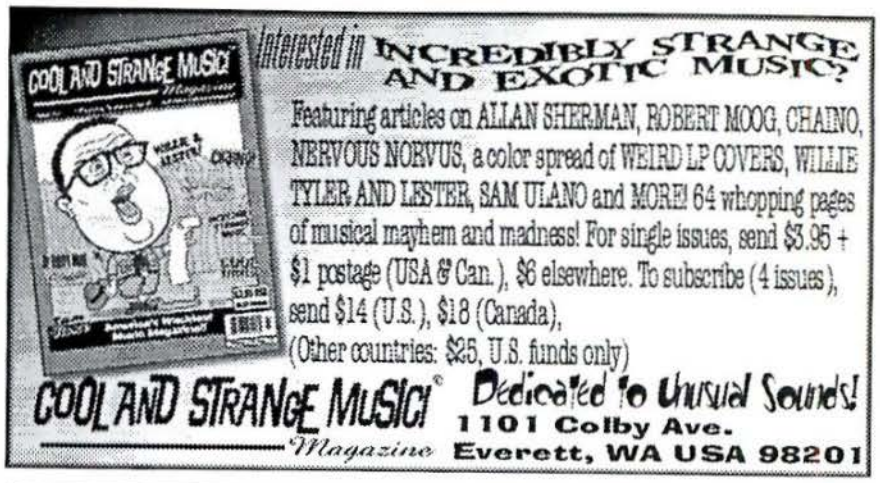


PUTTING THE 'HO' IN HOLLYWOOD

viva atari!

roswell road trip

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iN HITCH

issue twenty-three
summer 2000

Putting the "Ho" in Hollywood / 15
Some people in Tinseltown will do *anything* for a buck. And some for several million. The line between big-screen idol and small-time streetwalker is becoming ever so thin. Which stars are most to blame for whoring themselves out? By Rod Lott.

Have You Played Atari Today? / 22
In the '80s, there was nothing like the Atari 2600. And though today's technology has eclipsed it by miles – perhaps even light years – you still can't beat the simplicity of a four-directional joystick, a colored dot and a lazy afternoon. By Rod Lott.

The Truth Is Here: Road Trip to Roswell / 20
Cue the spooky theme music. Whether New Mexico likes it or not, the town of Roswell has gained notoriety for its alleged UFO crash of 1947. Whether it *happened* or not, the town is cashing in. By Chris Sharpe.

COP HUMOR · RAVERS · INTERNET PRANKS · COMICS · LOADS OF REVIEWS
HITCH
PUTTING THE 'HO' IN HOLLYWOOD
atari fever
roswell road trip

About the Cover
Every good Hollywood whore cover story deserves a good Hollywood whore for the cover, right? Well, we couldn't afford one, so local bartender Jessica Posey will just have to do. Decidedly un-whorelike, she didn't even make us pay her for the 15-minute shoot.

other stuff

The Beat Goes On... / 25
Sex! Drugs! Violence! Just another night on the force. By Rod Lott.
Better Living Through Raving? / 28
Is the mainstream ready for the rave scene? By Rod Lott.
E-Pranks! / 30
You want 'em, you got 'em. By Ken Davis and Rod Lott.

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THAT ROD GUY

CH-CH-CH-CHANGES

Twenty-three down. Who knows how many more to go?

Though I chose not to plug it on the cover, this issue marks HITCH's 6th anniversary. So what better time for an overhaul?

The last time we made major changes was, I think two years ago, and even then, it wasn't a total makeover. But this, quite frankly, is a much-needed boost. It's not that the past issues have *sucked*, but I hadn't really taken the time to give each and every page the design it needed. That's now changed, and I think you'll see it immediately in the abandonment of the almighty Times typeface in favor of Adobe Garamond and Trade Gothic.

Or maybe you have a life and don't care about fonts.

MOVE OVER, BACON!

But I'll bet you noticed that – *egads!* – for the first time ever, the contents page is on page 3, which bumps this "Heapin' Mailbag" to page 4. Don't worry; they'll adapt. The "HITCHBits" section follows as always, but now better packaged.

The "Disc Dish" and "Videos" sections have been revamped as well, to include more photos and sidebars. Joining them for the first time is our print review section, handled by Chris Sharpe. Here, we'll review books, zines and comics – something we haven't done in about four

HEAPIN' MAILBAG

HITCH
P.O. Box 23621
Oklahoma City, OK 73123-2621

e-mail: RLott@aol.com

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Rod,

My bud Scott Cornish had a sample issue sent to me. Well, I hated it. In fact, there wasn't one good article in it. Not one good writer in it. Even though I didn't pay for the issue, I felt ripped off. When I see such a slickly printed magazine, I figure there is potential. Maybe I should just stick to *MAD*.

Anyway, enclosed is a check for six issues. I am going to buy your rag until it reaches its potential. Mail the latest issues ASAP, as I have just had a couple of surgeries on my knee and I can't do anything but lay in bed, read and listen to the radio.

Let me apologize for that first paragraph. I am taking so many Vicodins, Percocets and Ambiens that one minute I feel like I'm flying, and the next I feel like I'm flying with JFK Jr. I actually like HITCH. Keep up the good work. Thanks, dude. Fuck you (damn – those pills again).

The Great Brian Last
Lido Beach, NY

MOVED TO URINATION

Dear Rod,

HITCH 21 made me pee my pants! (Dry-cleaning bill will follow!) It was that funny.

There's a void in my life that can only be filled by having all available back issues of HITCH. Thank you very much, Rod. Each HITCH is a masterpiece.

Shaun Fields
Toronto, Ontario
Canada

Rod:

I got the magazine this weekend and it is awesome, delivering laughs as expected. Particularly the feature documenting the random online chats ("Instant Messaging = Instant Fun," HITCH 22). The "You had me at hello" dialogue had me peeing, as did the banter with suicidal threats. As usual, so funny.

Greg Heanue
Atlanta

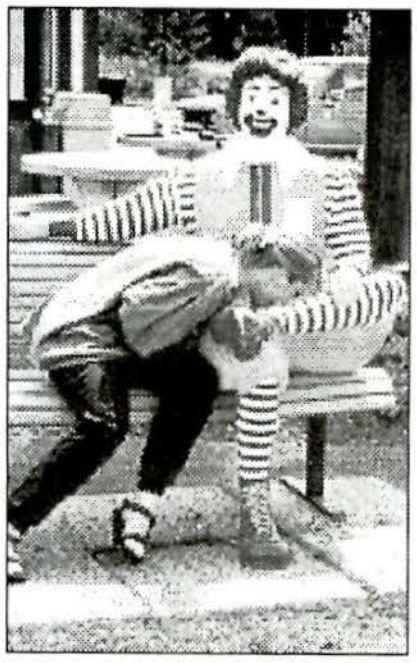
So glad to hear from readers that HITCH *has finally achieved one of its oft-stated goals: to cause the involuntary expulsion of urine among unsuspecting readers.*

GOOD QUESTION!

Rod:

You are a god! I just received my HITCH care package today. Kick ass! I'm buried in homegrown Okie satire! I just had enough time to thumb through the latest issue – I loved the IM pranks page. My favorite line: "I started early. You had me at hello."

I remember in one of your older HITCH mags, you had a "He-Man Adventure" that included a photo of you posing with Ronald McDonald. Why didn't you think of *this*?



Jarrod Kopp
Tulsa, OK

Probably because my wife was taking the picture.

THE USUAL

Dear Rod,

Enclosed is a check so you can keep those HITCH issues coming. It sure beats those *Better Homes & Gardens* magazine my mom sub-

scribed me for last Christmas…

Andrea Gibson
Athens, OH

Rod:

My oh my, my wife and I laughed out loud at the new **HITCH** last night. That "Making a List, Checking for Lice" was very very *very* funny, as was your bit on AOL speaking to people. Lotsa laughs.

I'm laughing as I type, just a-thinkin' 'bout it!

E. Mervin
New York City

Rod:

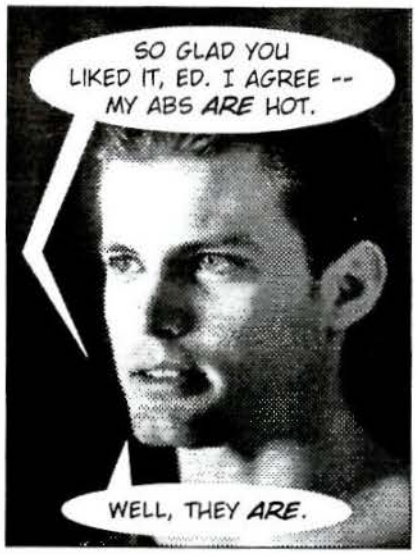
I think **HITCH** 22 is great. The letters, intro and reviews are always awesome. I don't care about the reviews in a lot of mags, but in **HITCH** they are always interesting and fun to read. The Darth Maul thing ("Darth Maul: Bachelor's Night Out") was awesome. The pics are so funny even without the captions.

"*The Omega Code* Comics" was *great*. Very effective and good comic timing. Harrison's movie reviews were awesome. I think you should make this a regular feature.

Despite my love of breasts, I haven't read "Got Breastmilk?" yet. Nothing really wrong with "Livin' La Vida 8-Ball," but I fell like I've read it somewhere before. As for "Rich Pringle's Fun and Games," I hate white trash as much as the next guy, but reading the misspellings just grated on my nerves.

Ed Donovan
Burbank, CA

Casper Van Dien responds:



THE TANGLED WEBSITE WE WEAVE

RLott:

Hi. Just wanted to tell you I enjoyed the website. Particularly the wide range of music you have reviewed and the layout of the site.

Krotix@aol.com

SUBS & WHATNOT

Rod,

Finally getting around to subscribing to your magazine. As I've told you before, it's a riot.

Bob Vickers
Springdale, PA

Some postcards we got. (above) Hey, what's the "C" stand for? (below) If they thought I was going to call them back, the nuts illustration killed all chances.

L.W.P.
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AUTO

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years.

Then you'll find a real, honest-to-God section of comics. We attempted this for one issue way back in **HITCH** 12, but now it's here to stay. It's anchored by the first installment in a series of Chris Sharpe's "Cannibal Exchange Student," as well as the mighty return of Ralph the Appendix, by Brian Winkeler.

Finally, the page opposite the inside back cover is called "-30-," and it's our page of news briefs, so we can utilize some of the more interesting press releases that come our way.

If this issue were a computer program, it'd be called **HITCH** 3.0. I'm pleased with it. How 'bout you?

MORE MUSIC TO READ HITCH BY

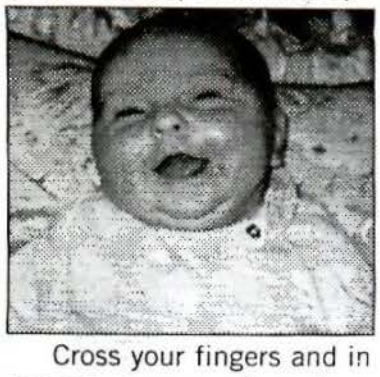
If you're lucky enough, you'll find a cool free CD in the middle of this issue, courtesy of Emperor Norton Records.

Our thanks to Tim Husom at the label for providing us with this nifty little disc of future sounds.

If there isn't one, you need to subscribe, my friend, and tell us you want the free stuff.

CONGRATS TO ME!

Our daughter Audrey was born March 28, healthy and all. Isn't she cute? (Of course she is; she's mine!)



Cross your fingers and in two years, we can have her and Harrison do a Siskel & Ebert-type thing.

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HITCH

#23 • SUMMER 2000

"The truth is, I practice absurdity quite religiously." —*Alfred Hitchcock*

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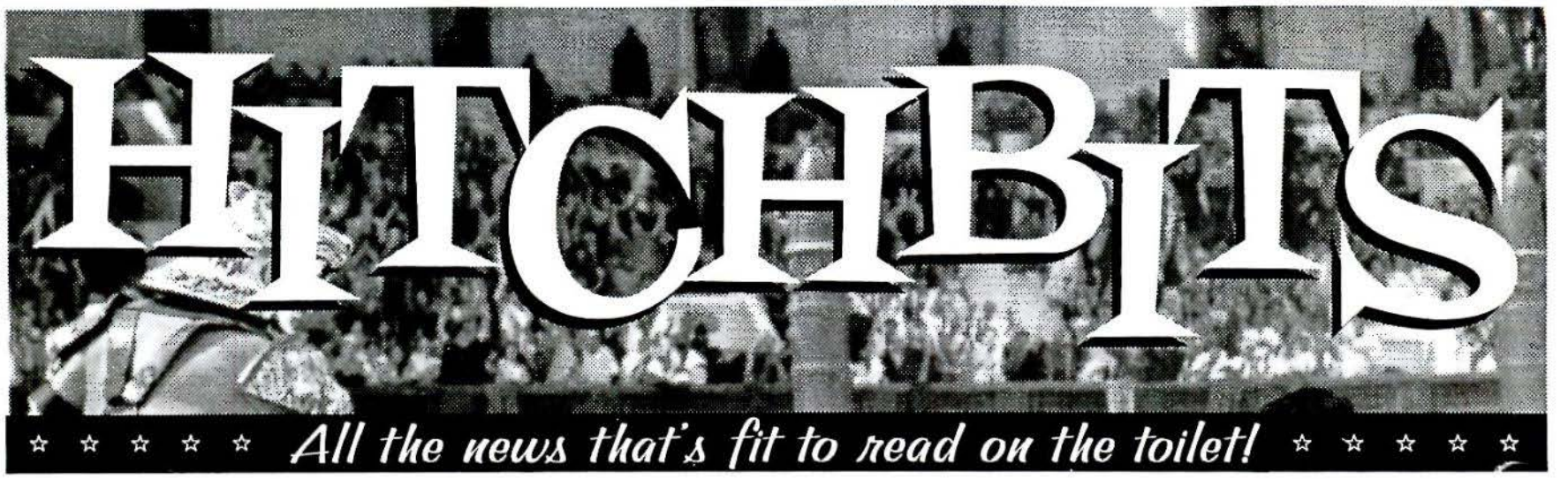
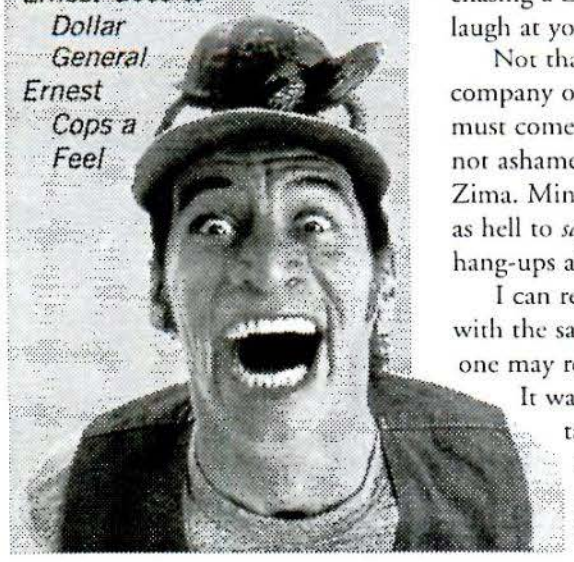


ERNEST MOVIES WE'VE NOW BEEN SPARED

Ernest Saves Kwaanza
Ernest Gets a Hangnail
Bitch-Slap Ernest
Ernest Goes to Compton
Ernest Saves $2.99
Ernest in the House
Ernest in the Shallow End of the Gene Pool
Ernest Scared Shitless
Ernest Comes Out
Ernest in Withdrawal
Ernest Goes to Hell
Ernest Scared of Commitment
Ernest Acquitted
Ernest the Vampire Slayer
Ernest Converts to Islam
Ernest N the Hood
Ernest Goes to Delaware
Booty Call Ernest
Ernest Goes to Rehab
Ernest Gets the Clap
Ernest Scared Straight '99
Ernest Goes to Sleep ... Forever
Ernest Saves Rosh Hashanah
Ernest Makes Faces
Ernest Gets Lung Cancer
Ernest Tosses Salads
Ernest Gets a Migraine
Ernest Goes to Dollar General
Ernest Cops a Feel



In defense of Zima

Transparent as a promise from the Clinton administration, the crystal-clear malt beverage Zima burst onto the alcoholic beverage scene – if such a thing exists – in the mid-1990s. Its mega-hyped launch was accompanied by hip TV spots featuring slackers harboring both a diabolical thirst and a devil-may-care attitude, ending with their utterings of "Zima's good."

Now that the '90s have come to a close, however, Zima is so unhip it hurts. Don't ask me what factors contributed to its meteoric rise and fall within a five-year period, if not less. All I know is that if you are seen drinking, ordering and/or purchasing a Zima, people will openly laugh at you.

Not that I have stock in the company or anything, but I feel I must come to Zima's defense. I'm not ashamed to say that I like Zima. Mind you, I'm embarrassed as hell to *say* "Zima," but have no hang-ups about consuming it.

I can remember my first Zima with the same fluid memories as one may recall his or her first kiss. It was at an El Chico. And it tasted damned good with my beef enchilada dinner (double rice, no beans, please). I've liked it ever since, even though it's by no means a regular purchase.

Upon discovering that I had it in my refrigerator once, my brother mocked me. It turned out, however, that he had never tried it. With that old adage of knocking-and-trying in mind, I forced one on him.

"It tastes like … *Swee Tarts!*" he said after the first gulp, as if that's a bad thing. To him, it was. (One Internet know-it-all puts it more bluntly: "Disgustingly tasteless beers.")

Zima is neither disgusting, tasteless nor a beer. It is highly consumable; marked with a sharp, acid-citrusy taste that is not unlike what the liquid-metal guy from *Terminator 2* would taste like if you licked him; and is clearly, as is printed on the blue-and-black label, a "malt beverage."

As a testament to its one-time semblance of popularity, Zima even has – or had – its own Internet newsgroup, *alt.zima*. Go there now, however, and the only messages you'll find are of the pyramid-scheme variety, titled "THIS IS FOR REAL…," "Build your own cable box," "Legal cable TV descrambler" and "FREE CABLE." (What, no "ENTER HERE FOR XXX HOT N NASTY FUN!")

Since that newsgroup is all but dead, this is the only forum in which I can air my views. I will spend it debunking a few commonly held Zima myths.

Myth #1: There is nothing worse than drinking Zima.

The Truth: Oh, please, people. There are many things *far* worse that you could ingest than Zima. For example:

- Ammonia
- Surge
- Battery acid
- Water that dentures were soaked in
- Pee-pee

Myth #2: If you drink Zima, you must be gay and/or a puss.

The Truth: You are confusing Zima with Tab Cola.

Not that my sexuality has ever been called into question, but rest assured I'm hetero. And I may have cried at *Terms of Endearment*, but no "puss" is given a ready-made porn-star name like "Rod Lott."

Myth #3: Zima is so embarrassing to drink, you can only drink it in the comfort and solitude of your own home.

The Truth: Nonsense. Remember that Zima is a clear and sparkling beverage. To the naked eye, it is indistinguishable from a 7-Up, a Sprite or a Slice. Therefore, you can pour Zima into a cup and enjoy it at work, too. It's quite the pick-me-up for those on the job who traditionally find the workday to be an 8-5 grind.

Just be prepared for conversations with co-workers like:

▸▸

In defense of Zima (continued)

Co-Worker: "Geez, Jim, you sure do like 7-Up, huh?"

You (slurred): "Wha—? Oh, yeah. … Un-cola rocks."

Co-Worker: "You drink it like your life depends on it!"

You (mid-hiccup): "Hey, same to you, buddy!"

Co-Worker: "I'm getting worried about you, Jim."

You (slurred): "You wanna piece of me? *C'mon!*"

Myth #4: Zima is nasty.

The Truth: If you dislike its taste, add an extra ingredient or two. One popular alternative is to toss a handful of Country Time lemonade crystals into the bottle and stir. Although tasty, this chemical combo is akin to the ol' vinegar-and-baking-soda volcano-simulation solution one finds at every grade-school science fair.

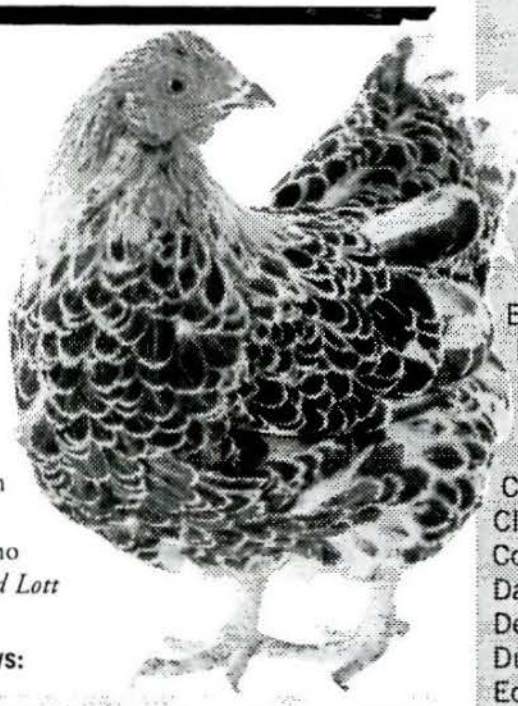
And to be honest, the Zima burp is a much more pleasant digestive event than the common beer burp – not only for you, but also to those around you.

To summarize, Zima is *not* nasty. But it should be noted that if you ply your partner with enough of them, it might allow you to *do* the nasty.

And with that observation alone, I think I just converted half the population.

—Rod Lott

When customers cry fowl, consult this



A crazy thing, this fast food business. You stick an item on your menu, hoping for the best. After a good long period of non-performance, you yank it off the menu.

Then people come into order it and get pissed when it's not there.

Quick! Customer service control! What do you do?

Thanks to the quick-thinking corporate office of one now-defunct fast food chain, managers didn't even have to think about it. When fried chicken was unceremoniously dumped off the menu, HQ issued managers a handy Q&A guide to deal with the chicken-hungry consumers. The unedited memo appears below.

—Rod Lott

When the customer does this...	...you should react as follows:
Customer orders 8pc or larger	Manager: We no longer serve Fried Chicken. I can offer you a VIP card.
	Manager: We are no longer serving Fried Chicken. Please accept this coupon redeemable for your choice of 4 Lg. Sandwiches and 2 Lg. Fries for $6.99.
Customer orders 2 or 3 PC Chicken Meal	Manager: I'm sorry, but we're no longer offering Fried Chicken. Would you care to try a chicken fillet or grilled chicken combo?
	NOTE: *If a customer ordering a 2 or 3 pc meal becomes dissatisfied and needs attention, please issue a VIP card to this customer.*
"Why are you deleting Fried Chicken?"	Manager: So we can concentrate on better serving your needs.
"Why?"	Manager: It's hard to manage several menu items. We're striving to serve quality food, faster, in a friendly manner.
	Manager: We are trying to focus more on our Burgers and sandwiches to serve you better.
"Will Fried Chicken be coming back?"	Manager: NO.

Ernest Saves War-Torn Eastern Europe
Pokémon: The Second Movie – Mewtwo vs. Ernest
Ernest Sells 'Shrooms
Ernest Touches Vern
Ernest Drinks Rubbing Alcohol
Ernest Gets Earnest
Ernest Goes to the Tag Agency
Ernest Smells Funny
Ernest Bites the Big One
Ernest Gets Some
Ernest Scared Us All
Ernest Goes Limp
Drop Dead Ernest
Ernest Goes Postal
Ernest Goes in His Pants

ANATOMICAL TERMS THAT SOUND LIKE POKÉMON CHARACTERS

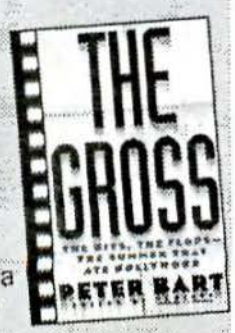
Alcock
Amnion
Anus
Azygos
Bartholin
Blastopore
Brachial
Bregma
Chondrin
Cilia
Clitoris
Corpuscle
Dartos
Deltoid
Duodenum
Ectoderm
Epiglottis
Femur
Fibula
Flocculus
Fontanelle
Fungiform
Ganglion
Ginglymus

Groin
Hamular
Hernia

Ileum
Jejunum
Keratin
Labia
Lagema
Lecithin
Majendie
Mammilla
Meatus
Medulla oblongata
Mesocolon
Neuroglia
Nipple
Obelion
Pancreas
Perineum
Profunda
Pubis
Rectum
Sarcoplasm
Scrotum
Sphincter
Spina bifida
Subclavian
Suprascapular
Sutura
Tegmentum
Tibia
Trochlear
Tympanum
Urethra
Zygoma

THREE GROSS INACCURACIES IN PETER BART'S BOOK *THE GROSS*

1. Norm MacDonald did not star in *Disturbing Behavior.*
2. There is no such movie entitled *Shoot Fish.* There is, however, a *Shooting Fish.*
3. Kevin Smith is not a "brilliant" filmmaker.

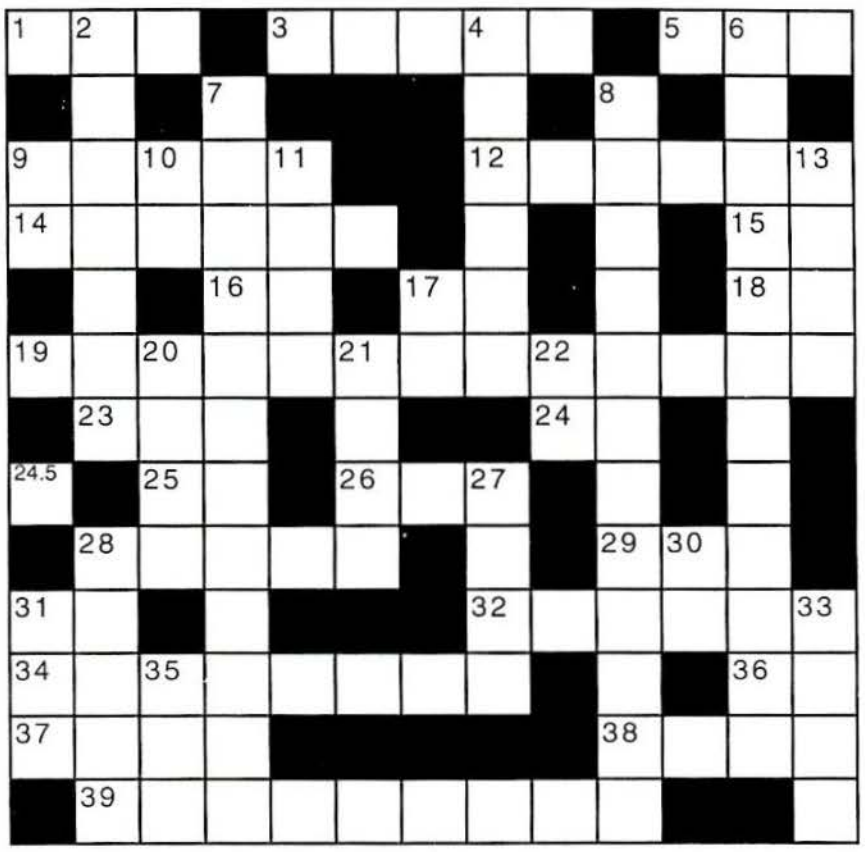


GREAT LINES FROM *SHOWGIRLS*

Tony Moss: "I'm erect. Why aren't you?"

Al Torres: "It must be weird, not having anybody cum on

The HITCH *Crossword*



Across

1 Warren has more of it.
3 Not a bad cracker at all.
5 Flows through Nicholson's veins.
9 This year's Oscars.
12 What Teena Brandon wanted to do.
14 Boon to the pharmaceutical industry.
15 Preposition for "hell in a handbasket."
16 Reaction to the Douglas/Zeta-Jones coupling.
17 Easiest part of Matt Damon cartoon to spell.
18 Half a Teletubbie.
19 Sitcom star with diarrhea-prone wife.
23 Whitney likes to get it.
24 Precedes San Jose inquiry.
24.5 We're thinking of a letter between C and J.
25 66.6% of an ass.
26 Just another worthless rapper.
28 What Whitney likes to get 23 Across with.
29 Ben Affleck (abbrev.)
31 Cancel this show, stat!
32 To recycle a condom.
34 Camryn Manheim (colloq.)

Down

2 To not eviscerate your enemy.
4 Hyperactive, resilient Asian carnivorous mammal.
6 Hot U.S. import.
7 Jim Varney in a vase.
8 Tommy Lee has it; Pam only on occassion.
9 The Jesus-less years.
10 Sonny Bono's last word?
11 Reaction to Jolie/brother coupling.
13 Resulting state of 23 Across.
17 All things farm.
20 Al Gore (colloq.)
21 Shared by Fergie and Peppermint Patty, probably often.
22 Heard on UPN: "Yo, where you __?"
27 How things go around here.
28 Result of kissing Courtney Love.
30 Rhymes with whore.
31 Estimated time of manure (abbrev.)
33 Did urinate.
35 Mortal enemy of Barbara Eden.
36 Found on porn stars' records.
37 Wishful thinking for Babs.
38 Karl Malden never leaves home without it.
39 Borgnine at the buffet.

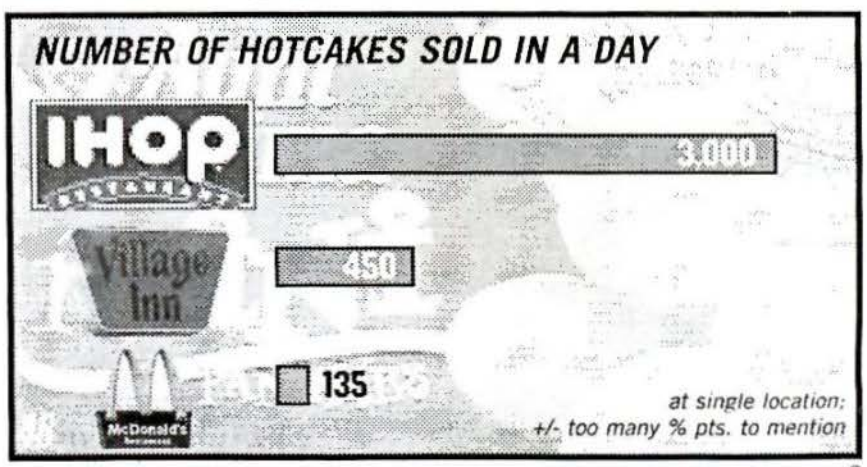
ANSWERS ON PG. 11

Next on CNBC: Flapjack futures

You've heard the saying "sell like hotcakes" many times before. But have you ever paused to think whether that's good or bad? I mean, just how lucrative is the flapjack market in today's world?

A quick phone call to a few area pancake specialists shed some light. Whoever answered the phone was asked how many hotcakes they sell in one day's time.

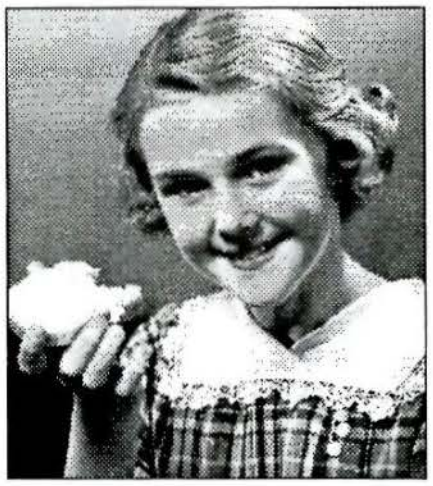
At right, the results, for your own interpretation. —*Rod Lott*



Filth: It's what's for dinner!

How much filth is too much filth? When it comes to the foods we eat (and take for granted), the government has it down to a science! Listed below for several of your favorite consumables are the criteria for what prompts the feds to take action. Anything less than what's listed, however, is kosher.

"The government has set forth these allowable amounts of contamination," our anonymous environmental expert told us, "because you simply cannot have a product that's free of *everything*. —*Rod Lott*



Don't let the bread bugs bite!

Examples of Food Defect Action Levels

Product	Defect	Action Level
Apricots, canned	Insect filth	Average of 2% or more by count insect-infested or insect-damaged
Beets, canned	Rot	Exceeds average of 5% by weight of pieces with dry rot
Broccoli, frozen	Insects and mites	Average of 60 aphids, thrips, and/or mites per 100 grams
Cherries, maraschino	Insect filth	Average of over 5% rejects due to maggots
Corn, canned	Insect larvae (corn ear worms, corn borers)	Two or more 3 mm or longer larvae, cast skins or cast skin fragments of corn ear worm or corn borer, the aggregate length exceeding 12 mm in 24 pounds
Curry powder	Insect filth Rodent filth	Average of more than 100 insect fragments per 25 grams
Olives, pitted	Pits	Average of more than 1.3% by count of olives with whole pits and/or pit fragments 2 mm or longer measured in the longest dimension
Peanut butter	Insect filth Rodent filth Grit	Average of 30 or more insect fragments per 100 grams Average of 1 or more rodent hairs per 100 grams Gritty taste and water insoluble inorganic residue is more than 25 mg per 100 grams
Tomatoes, canned	Drosophila fly	Average 10 fly eggs per 500 grams; or 5 fly eggs and 1 maggot per 500 grams; or 2 maggots per 500 grams

Calculator Fun 101

Hey, kids! Whip out your calc, do the math and then turn it upside-down for the big punchline!
Whoa-ho! Hours of fun!

Why can't Dolly Parton see her own shoes?	12744 + 45264 =	_____
What is Ellen DeGeneres?	3965.3 * 60 =	_____
What is Ronald Reagan older than?	20 * 2885.7 =	_____

you."

Crystal Conners: "You've got nice tits. I like nice tits."
Nomi Malone: "I like having nice tits."

Crystal Conners: "You are a *whore*, darlin'."
Nomi Malone: "I am not a whore!"

Tony Moss: "You got something wrong with your nipples?"

Crystal Conners: "I've had dog food. Long time ago. Doggie Chow. I used to love Doggie Chow."

Nomi Malone: "You can't touch me, but I can touch you. I'd really love to touch you."

FIVE MOVIE DEVICES WE'RE TRULY SICK OF AND NEVER EVER WANT TO SEE AGAIN

1. Silence follows some dramatic speech and/or event, until one person decides to clap slowly and pronounced. Another person joins in, then another, and the place soon erupts into applause.

2. A character mixes together a lot of foods into one gross concoction and eats it, for comedic purposes.

3. Two guys in the front seat of a car look at each other and scream, for comedic purposes.

4. Sped-up film, for comedic purposes.

5. The use of the line "Houston, we have a problem" for comedic purposes.

RIDICULOUS QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"I wish in a way, that I had, you know, gone to college and gotten a degree. I would have tried to have gotten a degree in probably philosophy. If there is such a thing. Is there?"

–Melanie Griffith

"I don't do drugs. I smoke a little grass from time to time."

–Willie Nelson

"Everybody on TV is making fun of my house – fuck you!"

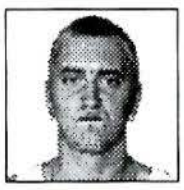
–Rick Rockwell of Who Wants to Marry a Multi-Millionaire?

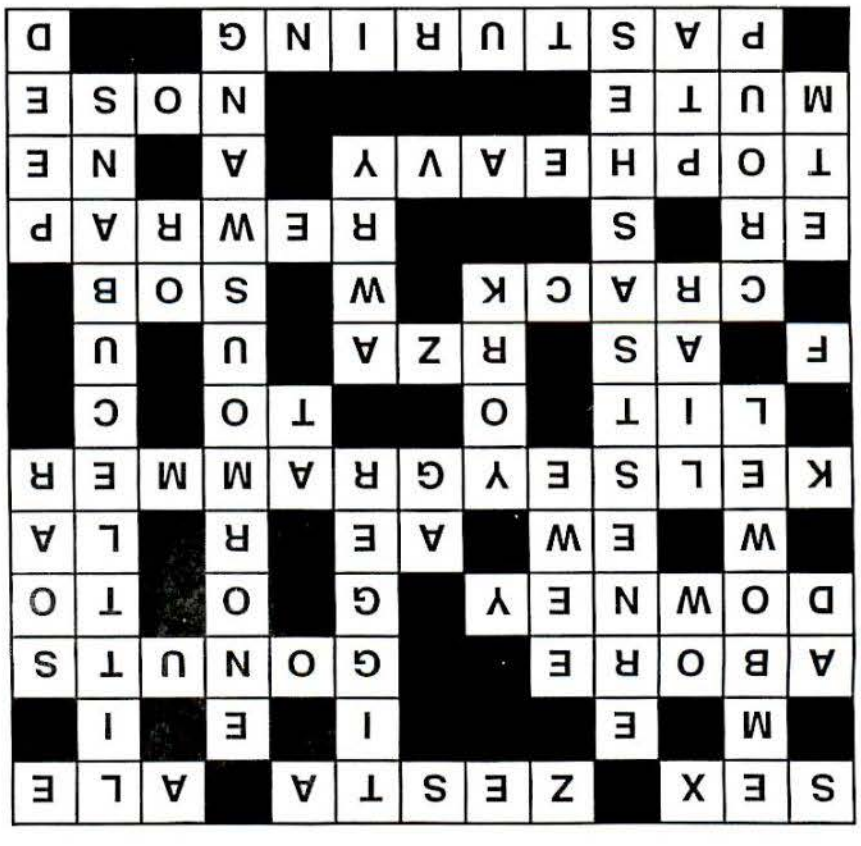
***MOVIELINE'S* HOLLYWOOD FACTOIDS #401-409**

401. When we mentioned Lori Petty on the previous page, 98 percent of you said, "She's still alive?!?"
402. Haley Joel Osment has never had a three-way.
403. Anyone who decides to make *Home Alone 4* is askin' for an ass-kickin'.
404. You know, Lori Petty – *League of Their Own? Tank Girl?*
405. When coming down from a high, Robert Downey Jr. often hallucinates of being eaten alive by Bolivian chiggers.
406. Warren Beatty thinks he's *sooo* hot.
407. Oh, c'mon – Lori Petty – thin, loud, butchy-looking?
408. Has anyone in this town *not* had Julia Roberts?

Gangstas getting a bad rap

Is it the heat? Gangsta rappers are not only burning up the charts, but police rap sheets as well. This summer, urban supastars are diving into legal trouble headfirst! To help you keep track of who's accused and/or convicted of doing what as the season continues, please use the scoresheet below. Current offenses – as of press time – already have been checked. First one to commit 'em all wins! *—Rod Lott*

Gangsta Rapper	Arson	Assault w/ deadly weapon	Concealed weapon	Domestic violence	Drug possession	Felon in possession of weapon	Kidnapping	Terrorist threats	SCORE
 EMINEM		✓	✓						2
FLESH-N-BONE		✓				✓			2
NATE DOGG	✓			✓			✓	✓	4
SNOOP DOGG					✓				1



The Robert Goulet
DEATH WATCH

"I'm gonna die when I'm 88; I got it all planned. I think 88's a good time to go and see the Lord. What the hell?"

Approximately 22 years and 3 months remaining

Gridlocked!

'Tis most interesting that of all the cable channels out there, the one with the most twisted program descriptions in the TV grid of *USA Today* is PAX, the family-friendly network of the religious right. Alas, this may be our last installment of this feature, as our free subscription to the McPaper has ended.

Network	Program	Description
Sci-Fi	*The Outer Limits*	Man finds wife ugly.
FX	*The X Show*	Alan Thicke; first tool box.
Disney	*Zorro*	Save Bernardo.
USA	*WWF War Zone*	When will Vince McMahon stop the madness?
Discovery	*Grand Coulee Dam*	The dam affects salmon.
TV Land	*Emergency!*	Brackett faints after aquarium catfish bites him.
Fox	*Getting Away with Murder: The JonBenet Ramsey Story*	Facts suggest scenarios.
Pax	*Diagnosis Murder*	Mark finds a suicide note odd.
Disney	*Zorro*	Rude Argentine.
Pax	*Highway to Heaven*	Guilty over a coma.
TNN	*Matt Houston*	Critic finds a head in his gelatin.
Disney	*Zorro*	Feign treachery.
WB	*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*	Oz is drawn to a female werewolf.
Independent Film	*Sisters*	Newswoman, private eye, Siamese twins, murder.
Disney	*Zorro*	Cannonballs.
Disney	*Horse Sense*	With Joey Lawrence.
Sci-Fi	*Xena: Warrior Princess*	Madwoman Xena.
WB	*Charmed*	The girls are faced with too many warlocks.
Disney	*Zorro*	Tamale vendor.
Pax	*Touched by an Angel*	Peter Scolari.
Pax	*It's a Miracle*	A cat finds a gas leak.
Sci-Fi	*Poltergeist: The Legacy*	Souls escape from jug.
Fox	*World's Wildest Police Videos*	Drunken driver claims to be a CIA operative.
Pax	*Animals Are People Too*	A shopping penguin; paralyzed dog uses wheelchair; a bowling dog.
HBO	*Lost & Found*	To spend time with an attractive neighbor (Sophie Marceau), a man (David Spade) kidnaps her dog, which proceeds to swallow a valuable ring.
Disney	*Perri*	Pine squirrel grows, forages, hibernates, courts.
Pax	*Totally Animals II*	Host John Ritter questions "What do dung beetles do?"
WB	*Jack & Jill*	A mysterious ice-cream man grants Jill his greatest wish.
Cinemax	*Bad Girls*	Gunslinging floozies flee town to avoid a hanging and meet an outlaw with a score to settle.
UPN	*7 Days*	Parker swaps bodies with the pope.
Pax	*Diagnosis Murder*	Fire!
WGN	*MacGyver*	Mac watches logger.
WB	*Angel*	Cordelia wakes mysteriously pregnant.

Looking for back issues?

Many are sold out, but we still have copies of the following issues for sale: #7, #8, #9, #10, #14, #15, #16 and #17. Issues are $3.50 each. Some are in *extremely* limited quantities, so please e-mail us at *RLott@aol.com* to reserve.

Consult our website at *www.hitchmagazine.com* for contents of each issue.

A show of hands, please? 409. When she squints, Annette Bening looks like an old Chinawoman.

HOW TO WIN ON CBS' *SURVIVOR*: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

1. Kill all the other people.

THE WIT AND WISDOM OF HEFNER ROAD ANIMAL HOSPITAL

"HAPPY MEW YEAR!"

"HEARTWORMS IN JANUARY? YES!"

"DO CATS LIKE CATSUP?"

"PLEASA COME TRY OUR PIZZA!"*

**This was actually Schlotsky's, but stupid enough to include anyway.*

NEXT TITLES TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE *HARRY POTTER* BOOK SERIES

Harry Potter and the Tar Baby
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Mad Dog
Harry Potter and the Bordello of Blood

*Harry Potter Meets Col. Sherman Potter from M*A*S*H*
Harry Potter and the Vaguely Satanic Overtones
Harry Potter and the Tramp
Harry Potter and the Fantastic Everlasting Gobstopper
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Kidney Stone
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Potted Meat

FEATURES IN UPCOMING ISSUES OF OPRAH'S *O* MAGAZINE

"Oprah's Bowel Movement Chart"
"My Favorite Pop-Tarts"
"Coping with Butter"
"Oprah's Menstrual Calendar"
"Inspirational Quotes Toilet Paper"
"Oprah's Checking Account Balance, Thanks to You"
"Living for Today – Oh, and for Crisco, Too"
"To Hell with That Martha Stewart Bitch"

ENDGAME: SPOILING THE ENDINGS OF RECENT MOVIES SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO WATCH THEM

Boys Don't Cry – Brandon and her friend are shot dead.

Mystery, Alaska – The team loses, but two kids get drafted.

Anywhere But Here – Natalie Portman goes off to college

Tom Neesnan's Belated Movie Reviews

Death Becomes Her
(1992)
Rating: 9 1/2 out of 10

When ol' Tom first heard about this good film, his hearing aid was on the bedside table, and he thought he heard the name of the film to be *Jeff Becomes Her*. Ha! Immediately, I phoned my friend, Jeff O'Hampton, and asked if this was an adaptation of the relationship he had with Adonie Billman, our high school's treasurer and No. 1 knockout! We all attended the same high school! Anyway, Hammy (Jeff's nickname) clarified that the film I was probably referring to was the hit film by Robert Zamcuts, *Death Becomes Her*. We decided after our evening slumbers, we would go and see the early showing of the film at the Bateswood Cinema near Forest and Pine, where the men's fitting shop used to be. The next day, we were treated to a film like no other, and in fact, during one part, one of the crazy ladies acquired a hole in her tummy! When that happened, I fell out of my chair and Hammy had to assist me up off of the floor, but not before picking up a quarter I had dropped! That's Hammy for you! See this film!

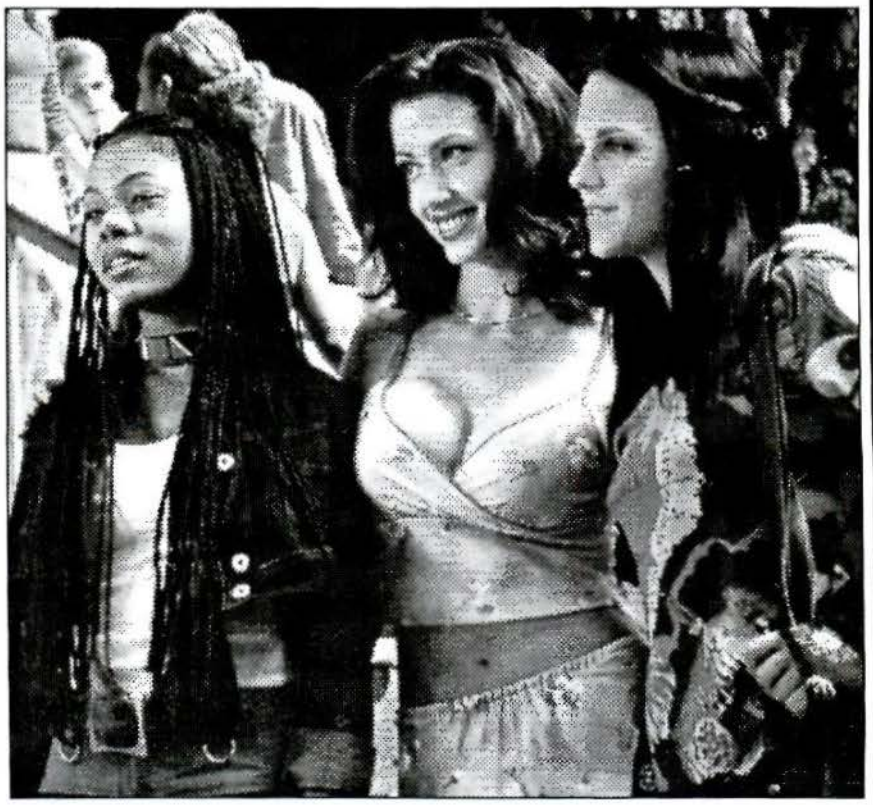
Daddy's Dyin' ... Who's Got the Will?
(1990)
Rating: 9 1/2 out of 10

Other six-word-titled movies have good parts, but not as many as this one!!!!!! Note that I put six explanation marks there, but that is not just because this film is six words. It is really six times as exciting and funny as many other pictures that have been made before. I liked this film a lot. It dealt with the topic of death, which was also featured in the film *Flat Timers*. I liked that film and I also liked another one that was real good, but this one was a doozy!

9 1/2 Weeks
(1986)
Rating: 9 1/2 out of 10

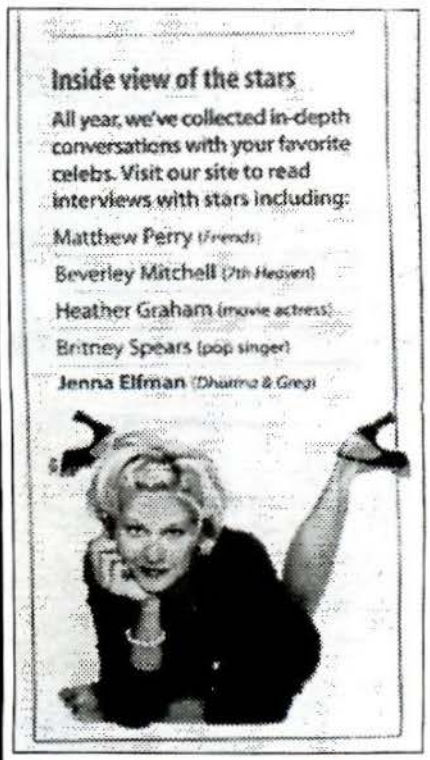
This movie starring the woman that owns a whole country was a bit steamy for Tom; however, the content provided a good bit of satisfaction for me! The film, which I believe was directed by up-and-coming rock star Todd Rundgren, was about a man that meets a girl and they fall in love and are together, due to their emotional feelings for each other and desire to be loved and to share their love. I love buttered corn, and to tell you the truth, I just can't get away from it! Believe you me, when I am at the theater, I will always get corn that has been popped! See this film!

Random Movie Still of the Month



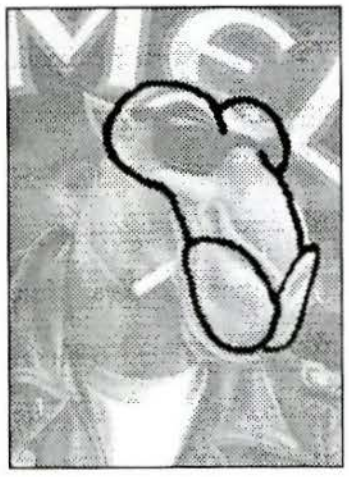
From left to right, Regina Hall, Shannon Elizabeth's right breast, Shannon Elizabeth's left breast and, um, er ... is it hot in here? Okay, where I was I? And, uh, someone else. Scary Movie. *Miramax.*

Errors in Journalistic Judgment

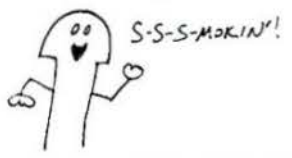

Inside view of the stars
All year, we've collected in-depth conversations with your favorite celebs. Visit our site to read interviews with stars including:
Matthew Perry (Friends)
Beverley Mitchell (7th Heaven)
Heather Graham (movie actress)
Britney Spears (pop singer)
Jenna Elfman (Dharma & Greg)

From last Dec. 24's USA Weekend, *an example of a headline with double meaning, given the photograph.*

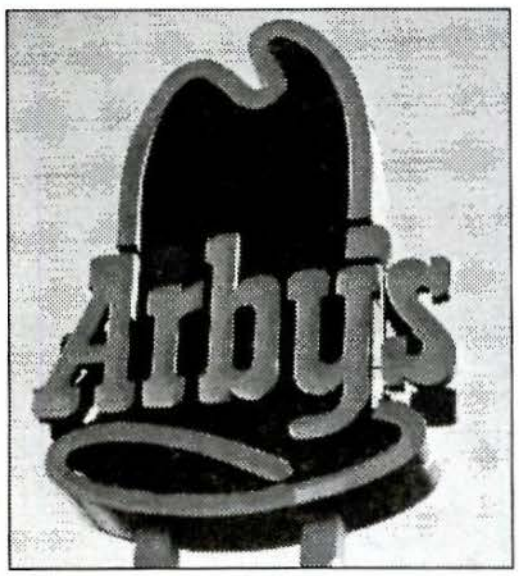
Phallus in Wonderland

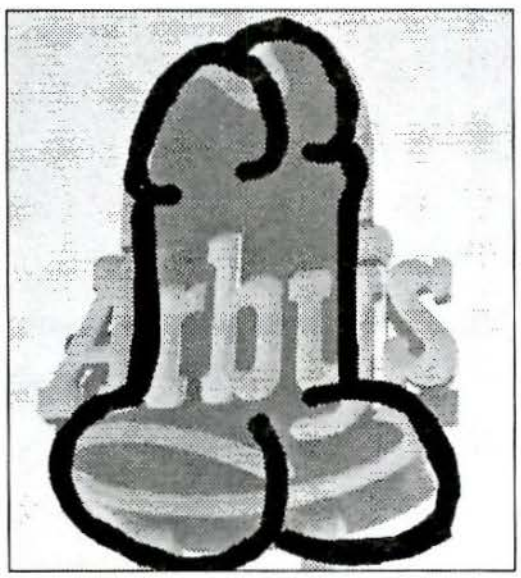


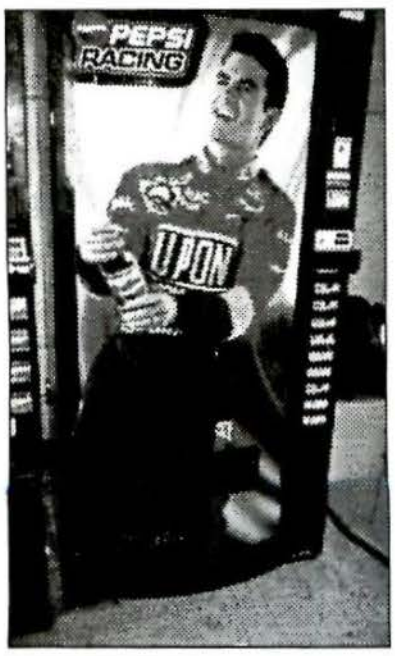
The tobacco industry already has many sins to answer for, but one of the most grievous is its use of the phallus in Joe Camel. This popular cartoon character is nothing more than a cleverly disguised walking penis head. If you look closely, you will notice a graphically detailed penis-head depicted in his nose. This cleverness manages to subliminally link the twin vices of smoking and fellatio. The effectiveness of this sinister work is supported by statistics that show the rise in both teen smoking and oral sex.



No area of life is safe from the insinuation of the phallus. Even so-called "family" restaurants will use its peacock-like splendor to attract new business. One of the more blatant cases is the Arby's fast-food chain. (Coincidentally, Arby's specialty happens to be roast "beef.") As one studies the suggestively erotic slope of the Arby's "cowboy hat" sign, he begins to notice the inflamed helmet of a circumcised member. We see the edges of the hat's rim have been plumply rounded so as to resemble a scrotum.



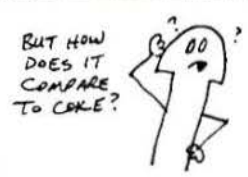




In recent years, NASCAR racing has shed most of its seedy reputation and is now embraced as a sport that is good, clean, deafening fun for the entire family. But conservative fans will be shocked to find NASCAR poster boy Jeff Gordon on the front of a Pepsi machine, joyously celebrating the act of masturbation. Gordon looks on with great pleasure as the Pepsi bottle spews forth its frothy innards. It is clear that Gordon is holding the bottle at crotch level, as an extension of his manhood. His orgasmic, somewhat cross-eyed expression testifies to the fact that the carbonated fluid is merely a symbolic stand-in for his own ejaculate.

—Chris Sharpe

Got a submission for Phallus in Wonderland? Send it to Peenie, in care of this magazine!



on the other side of the country.

Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo – Deuce quits prostitution, doesn't go to jail and ends up with girl of his dreams.

Happy, Texas – Both guys end up in prison, but their new girlfriends promise to wait for them.

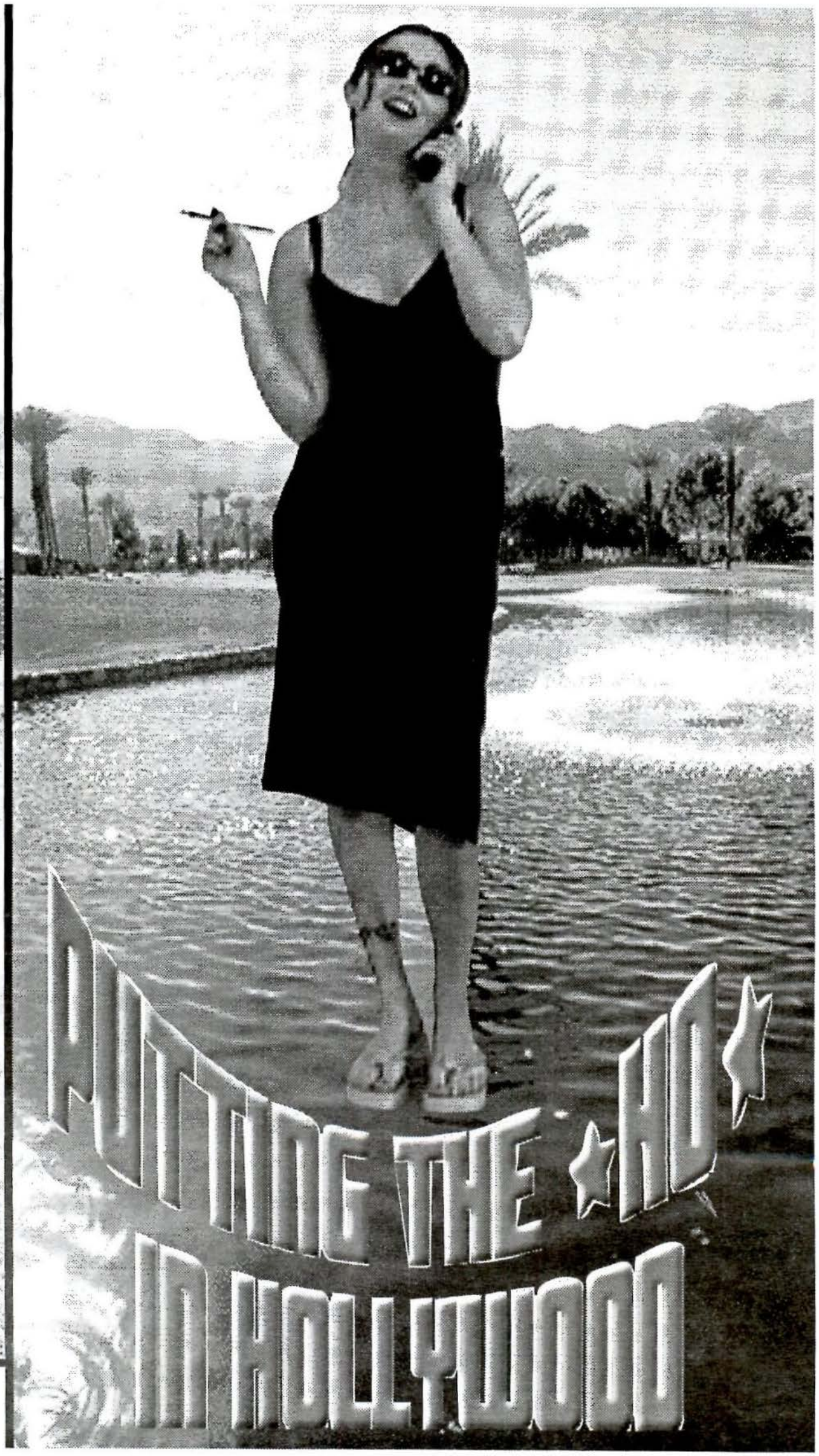
UNFORTUNATELY NAMED PEOPLE IN THE 1999 OKC YELLOW PAGES

Dick Virtue
Walker Butts
Bill Clinton
A.M. Gayman
Argyl Dick
Hadiana Assegas
Tamika Cheeks
Ginger Hiney
Mitchell Cockream
Jody Farthing
Curby Seaman
Paul Testeman
Delmer Teet
Otha Fagala
Dick Johnson
Donna Dyke
Lankike Abeyewardene
Donald Rumps
C.J. Swallows
Oscar Ramming
Rebecca Bloward
Roy Cunningtubby
Randy Penix
Diping Wang
Shannon Star Pharoah

THE FAREWELL GREETING WE SENT TO KATHIE LEE VIA AMERICANGREETINGS.COM

"I will miss your ample bosom, radiating like the sun from my TV."

RUNNING THE ★HO★ IN HOLLYWOOD



In Hollywood, there are two kinds of whores.

First, there are the ones who will do *anything* - no matter how demeaning or humiliating - so long as you pay them.

The end result is dehumanizing embarrassment, but, lured by the promise of a wad of dough, they cannot say "no."

And then, there are the hookers.

BY ROD LOTT

But despite the salacious nature of this magazine, we're only going to deal with the former lot – those actors and actresses who – time and time again – have humiliated (if not outright tainted) their CVs with films that smelled rotten from conception.

In much the same way that flies flock to feces, these men and women scramble toward shameful scripts and putrid projects. In a town drowning itself with money grubbers, we were able to select the four thespians – to use the term with total delicateness – for whom the term "no" most does not exist ... unless you'd pay them to say it.

WHOOPI GOLDBERG

Ten years later, the question begs being asked: Can you *believe* we gave Whoopi Goldberg an Oscar?

Her 1990 win for Best Supporting Actress in *Ghost* is quite clearly an abomination. Cast aside the fact that any flick top-billed by Patrick Swayze has no business being within a five-mile radius of the Dorothy Chandler Pavillion. Goldberg's performance wasn't a performance – it amounted to nothing more than a few minutes of screen time bickering for laughs and winking at the audience, planting the seeds of a whole annoying "You go, girl" attitude that even the passing of a decade can't seem to kill.

But that's beside the point. Somehow, winning the Oscar automatically cemented Whoopi as an icon, a national treasure to be loved and worshipped, despite the fact that – save for one Steven Spielberg film – she had done nothing beforehand that was worth the time invested.

And don't think for a second that Whoopi herself doesn't recognize this. It's as if the second after giving her acceptance speech, she thought, "Hell, now that I've got an Oscar, I can coast."

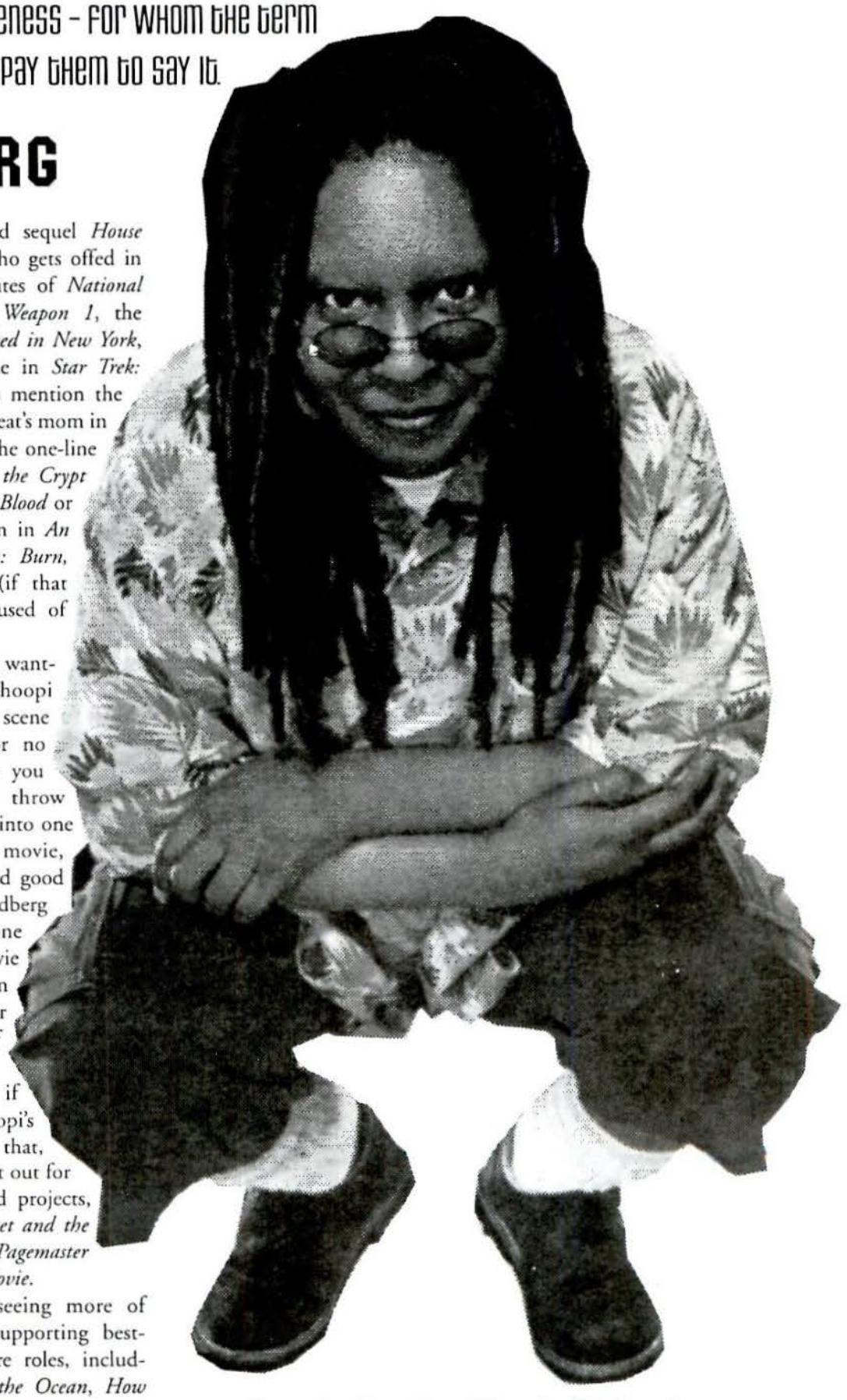
Instead of using the cache that comes with an Academy Award to acquire the juiciest of roles, Whoopi resigned herself to ... well, essentially playing herself, in a string of cameos and single-sceners that jarred the audience out of its collective suspension of disbelief and utter, "Hey! It's Whoopi," as if she were playing some cinematic game *a la* "Where's Waldo?"

Witness her uncredited appearance in the rushed sequel *House Party 2*, the cop who gets offed in the first few minutes of *National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1*, the theater face in *Naked in New York*, the wise robed one in *Star Trek: Generations* (not to mention the TV show), Buckwheat's mom in *The Little Rascals*, the one-line part in *Tales from the Crypt Presents Bordello of Blood* or her in-joke walk-on in *An Alan Smithee Film: Burn, Hollywood, Burn* (if that film could be accused of having a joke).

Basically, if you wanted to throw Whoopi Goldberg into one scene of your movie for no other reason than you just wanted to throw Whoopi Goldberg into one scene of your movie, chances are damned good that Whoopi Goldberg will appear in one scene of your movie for no other reason than to just appear in one scene of your movie.

Furthermore, if you just want Whoopi's *voice*, you can get that, too, as she's doled it out for a slew of animated projects, from *Captain Planet and the Planeteers* to *The Pagemaster* and *The Rugrats Movie*.

Lately, we're seeing more of Whoopi in the supporting best-friend/mother-figure roles, including *Deep End of the Ocean*, *How Stella Got Her Groove Back* and *Girl, Interrupted*. Basically, if your script



If you give her a fiver, Whoopi will take a dump. It will be released by Touchstone Pictures.

calls for a secondary, sassy-ass loudmouth, Goldberg has signed the deal before you've even had the work registered with the WGA.

It's a personality that has suited her well. She spins it into gold as often as you sneeze. It's even extending itself beyond film and TV work, as a cartoon rendering of Whoopi now schlepps for the soon-to-die website Flooz.com. (It's no coincidence that "Flooz" is just one letter shy of "floozy," which itself is a synonym for "whore.")

And in between all of this work, she found the time to use hidden-to-us feminine wiles to coerce both Ted Danson and Frank Langella into her bed. Furthermore, *they kept coming back*, leading us to believe Goldberg may be more adept at casting spells than acting.

But *wait! It doesn't stop there!* Nope, Whoopi can be seen five days a week as the center square on TV's revival of the *Hollywood Squares* game show. And if anything screams *"Check, please!"* more than *Hollywood Squares*, well, Whoopi is probably involved in that, too.

A woman laughs because she just offered Whoopi an insane amount of money to do something incredibly embarrassing that she'll regret forever. Whoopi promptly accepted.

JOHN CLEESE

Had it not been for a late-spring afternoon in 1999, John Cleese's name might never have made this list.

But it just so happens that I had to be stuck in a screening of the dreadful remake of *The Out-of-Towners* that day – a movie so bad that Goldie Hawn's extremely puffy lips couldn't save it from sinking. And just when I thought this unfunny flick couldn't become less funny, it became *horrifying*.

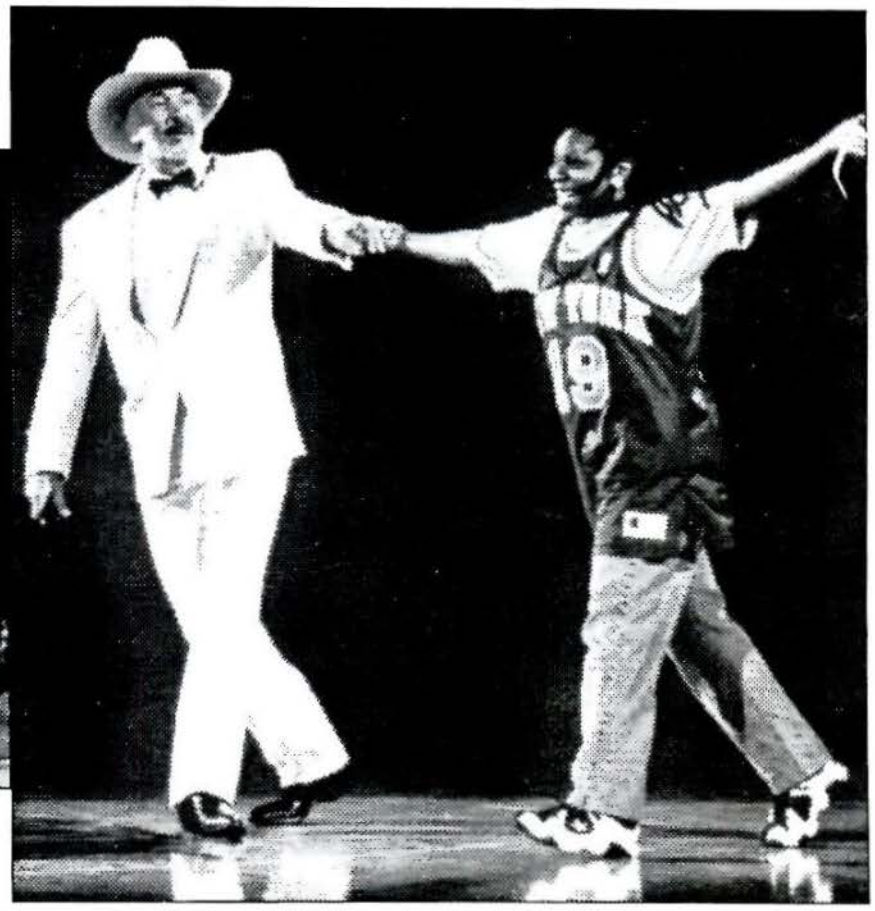
You see, through some unfortunate and unbelievable circumstances created only for a cheap laugh, Ms. Hawn was stuck outside on the ledge of some posh New York City hotel, which was managed by the irrepressibly snooty and unforgiving Cleese. Heretofore, Cleese's character had been that of the staunch snob who thinks not kindly of all of tourists, such as Hawn.

But then, Hawn peers through the window and watches as Cleese puts on women's clothing, clenches a rose between his teeth and prances around the room doing some little fu-fu dance. For no logical reason.

That the man who helped create one of the most influential comedy troupes of all-time would allow himself to appear in a scene that is the very antithesis of comedy caused all the air to rush out of my lungs. And with it went my respect for one Mr. John Cleese.

Forget about his work with Monty Python. Forget about his brilliant, Oscar-nominated script for *A Fish Called Wanda*. See, when you do drag for a "comedy" directed by the guy who did that other "comedy" *Bye Bye Love* (starring Paul Reiser, who would make this list if only he did a few more movies), you lose your right to be held in high regard.

That's not to say he wasn't already headed down that road anyway, lest we forget his agreeing to voice a monkey in the laff-riot *George of the Jungle*.



Could it be? Has Whoopi stooped so low to sell herself to a white plantation owner? Just how many millions do you need? You go (too far), girl!

One wonders if the whole *Out-of-Towners* incident wasn't some sort of trick. Certainly, Cleese would seem too intelligent to just throw on a dress and do some fu-fu dance because the alleged screenwriter deemed it necessary to forward the plot, which it didn't.

Should we give Cleese the benefit of the doubt and assume the director asked him to do it "just for the blooper reel" and then reneged on his word by putting it in the final cut?

Nah. Merely by signing to appear in the monstrosity, Cleese is guilty of settling for lesser material, even by association.

I imagine he was grip on what is funny and what isn't funny was so far gone at that point, he was all too eager to don a dress and do a fu-fu dance for the cameras. In fact, he probably ad-libbed and went any further.

"Shall I raise my dress at one point and point my naked arse toward the lens?" he probably asked. "Then you want I should place my penis into this bit of Swiss cheese, hmm?"

Actually, that last bit might be a riot. I think I'll see if the Farrelly brothers want it.

JANEANE GAROFALO

The April 10 cover story in *Brandweek* began with this line: "Coca-Cola is poised to shift gears behind its sagging Diet Coke brand with a $50 million star-studded campaign in June featuring the likes of Oprah Winfrey, Ron Howard, Ben Stiller and possibly Janeane Garofalo, offering their signature takes on the top diet drink."

Possibly? With Janeane, there's no "possibly" about it! You could bottle an invalid's blood-flecked

pee and she would be your spokesperson, so long as you gave her a check.

Unlike others on this elite list, Garofalo has major talent. She's smart and she can be funny as hell. But she just says "yes" far too much. How else can one explain *200 Cigarettes*, *Dog Park*, *Half Baked*, *Clay Pigeons* and *Now and Then* – to name but a few?

Yep, it's good ol' Janeane, looking like she doesn't want to be there, but will stay because of the check.

Two theories exist for Garofalo's inability to turn down scripts:

1. Perhaps her self-loathing schtick perpetuated by her stand-up act is no schtick at all. It is entirely possible that this woman is happiest when wallowing in pity. Thus, she willingly gets herself into tortuous situations.

"You want *me* to star in a *romantic comedy*? One that's *set in Ireland*? Okay," we can imagine her giving approval to the ill-fated and hardly seen *The Matchmaker*.

"You think audiences will believe some young hunk would actually choose *me* over *Uma Thurman*? Well, alright..." And thus was born *The Truth about Cats and Dogs*.

2. She is so amazed at her own success that she is afraid it could all be taken away tomorrow. So how else is she going to fund her smokes?

By watering herself down so much, Garofalo hasn't been allowed to be as scabrous and sarcastic on the big screen as she has been in surplus on the small one, from *The Larry Sanders Show* to *The Ben Stiller Show*.

Speaking of, her habit of appearing alongside buddy Ben makes us think she sometimes appears in lame flicks simply because he is, too – as if they're a couple of outcast high schoolers debating on how they should bide their time.

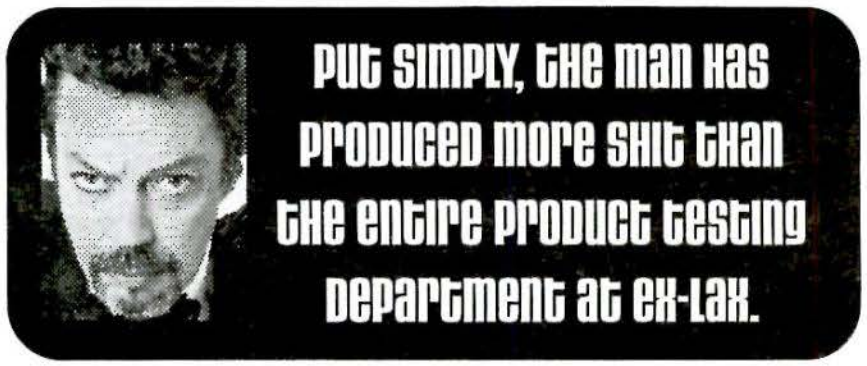
"So, uh, this school dance thing. You gonna go?"

"Nah, that's lame. You?"

"Well, I was thinking, you know, I might. I mean, it's gonna suck, but I don't got anything better to do."

"Uh-huh. I guess I'll go with you if you want me to."

"Yeah, okay, cool."



Just replace the above phrase "school dance" with "*The Cable Guy*" and you'll see what we mean. Methinks it's only Janeane's noted poor self-image that keeps her from appearing in animal porn.

TIM CURRY

It would take the "work" of 10 Whoopis, however, to measure up to the biggest Hollywood whore of all. Ladies and gentlemen, may I present to you (because *I* sure don't want him) ... Mr. Tim Curry.

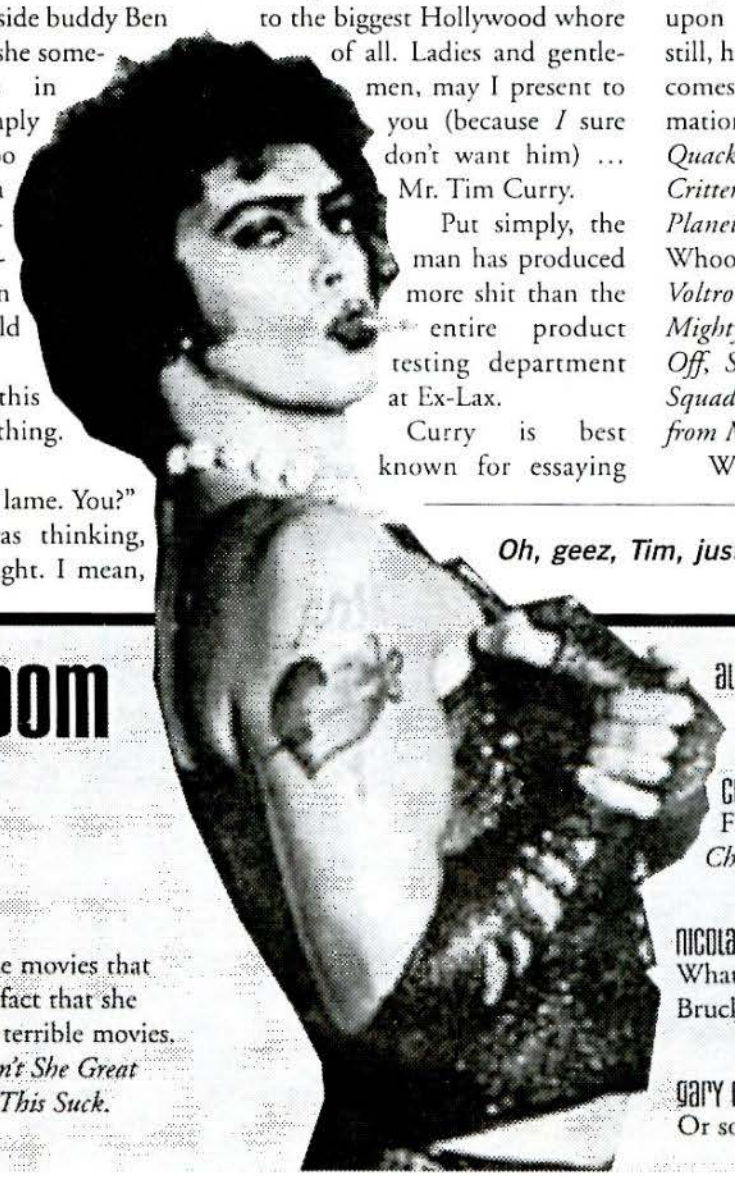
Put simply, the man has produced more shit than the entire product testing department at Ex-Lax.

Curry is best known for essaying the role of the musically inclined pervo-transvestite Dr. Frank-N-Furter in that horribly overrated cult item, 1975's *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* – a wretched film liked only by stoned loners crying out for acceptance (and toast!) and by pervo-tranvestites.

His nearly 100 roles ever since read like a list of flicks that even Michael J. Pollard would thumb his nose at: *Clue*, *Annie*, *The Shadow*, *McHale's Navy*, *Addams Family Reunion*, *Congo* and *FernGully: The Last Rainforest*.

To be fair, *FernGully* was animated, so Curry only appeared via voice. But he seems to work a lot in voice. I'm assuming because it's the public is so attuned to nausea upon seeing his ugly mug. Even still, he has zero willpower when it comes to being offered awful animation gigs. For proof, I submit *Quack Pack*, *Fish Police*, *Capitol Critters*, *Captain Planet and the Planeteers* (hey, do you know Whoopi?), *Bartok the Magnificent*, *Voltron: The Third Dimension*, *Mighty Ducks the Movie: The Face-Off*, *Superhuman Samurai Syber-Squad* and *Wild West Cowboys from Moo Mesa*.

When Curry's name appears



Oh, geez, Tim, just cut it out, will ya?

HEADED FOR WHOREDOM

(OR MAYBE EVEN THERE ALREADY ... THEY JUST DIDN'T MAKE THIS LIST!)

FREDDIE PRINZE JR.
Got a lame, predictable romantic comedy aimed squarely at girls just days away from their first menses? *He's in!*

BETTE MIDLER
Makes such terrible movies that she's accepted the fact that she just makes such terrible movies. Next up: the *Isn't She Great* sequel, *Doesn't This Suck*.

ALEC BALDWIN
Why? *The Shadow* knows!

CUBA GOODING JR.
From an Oscar to *Instinct* and *Chill Factor*. Look out below!

NICOLAS CAGE
What kind of dirt does Bruckheimer have on this guy?

GARY COLEMAN
Or so I'm told.

in the opening credits of any film *not* geared toward those who still crap their pants, you can be assured you'll get to see a sissified British man hamming it up with accents, pratfalls and scraggly eyebrows and beard. And yet, *Home Alone 2: Lost in New York still* managed to earn about $200 million.

Yet there are so few sissified British men with scraggly eyebrows and beards inhabiting the Hollywood hills, so it's no wonder Curry pops his gruesome head out so often to bring to magical life these characters that would have been better left acted out by the bond paper on which they were originally typed.

He plays a lot of butlers, which in real life, are exclusively sissified British men. He has played opposite Annie Potts more times than she has shared the screen with green slime (if you don't count Delta Burke).

He also appeared in Ridley Scott's *Legend*, playing "Darkness." You better believe it.

But butlers or no butlers, sissified British men or no sissified British men, whatever it is, you don't even have to ask: *Yes! Hell, yes! He'll do it!*

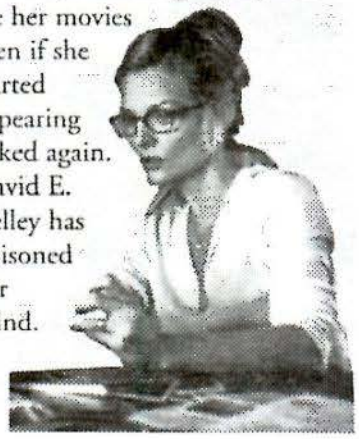
And so will almost any of them. And those who haven't yet, will, once their careers have fizzled. Then they'll readily sell out all their integrity in order to keep the cash flowin'.

Imagine, maybe even Steven Spielberg – years from now – so hard up for cash he turns his back on everything *Schindler's List* stood for in order to make *Springtime for Hitler*.

Hey, he knows Whoopi. H

Michelle Pfeiffer

Probably couldn't get people to see her movies even if she started appearing naked again. David E. Kelley has poisoned her mind.



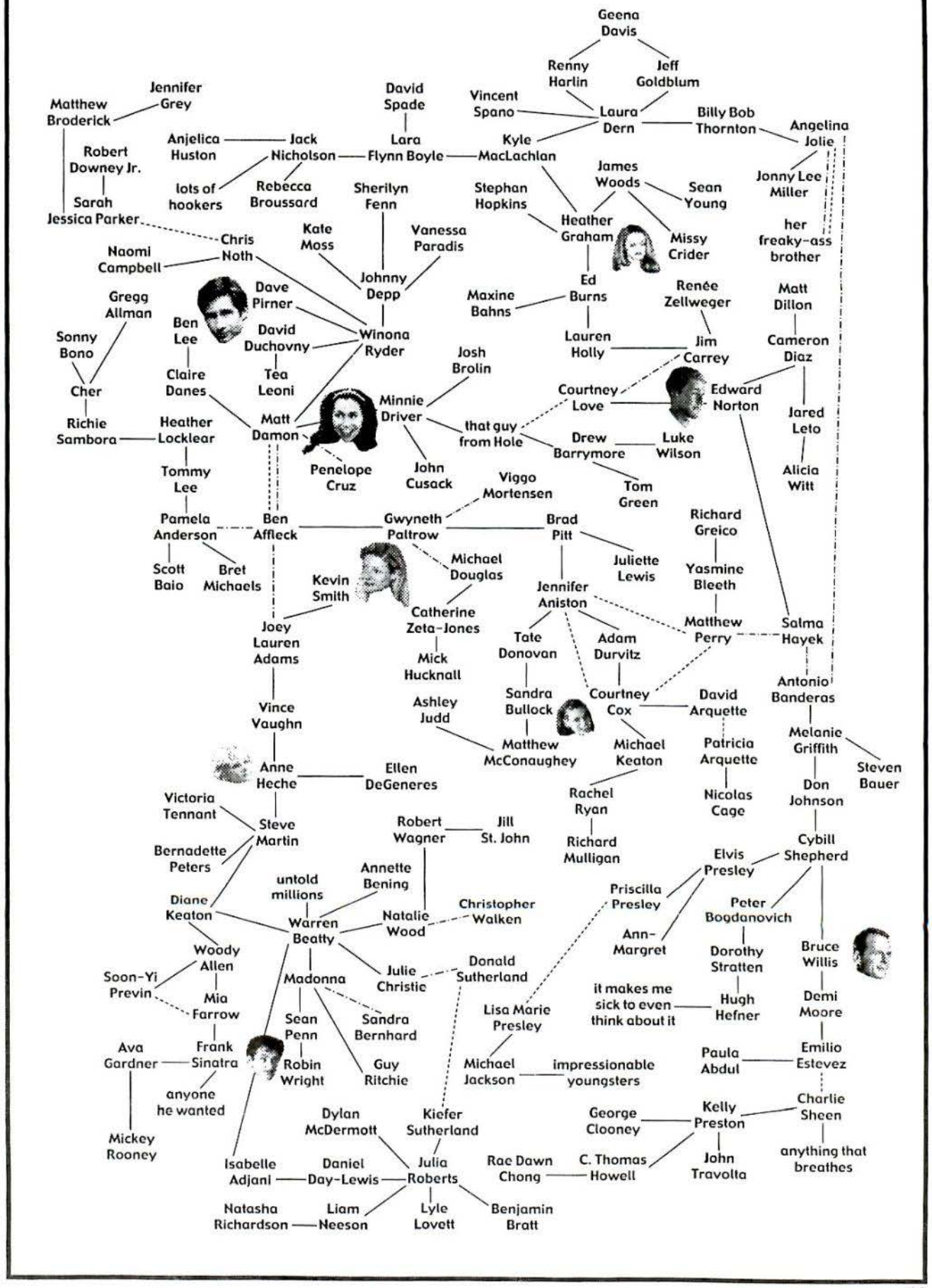
Six Degrees of Tradin' Bacon

And speaking of ... in Hollywood, it's not so much *what* you've done as it is *who* you've done, right? With so many predatory stars and eager starlets, the town has become pretty incestuous, as our chart below demonstrates.

Keep in mind, this is entirely incomplete. We couldn't fit *all* of Winona or Julia's partners on this page. Or Warren's in this book.

LEGEND

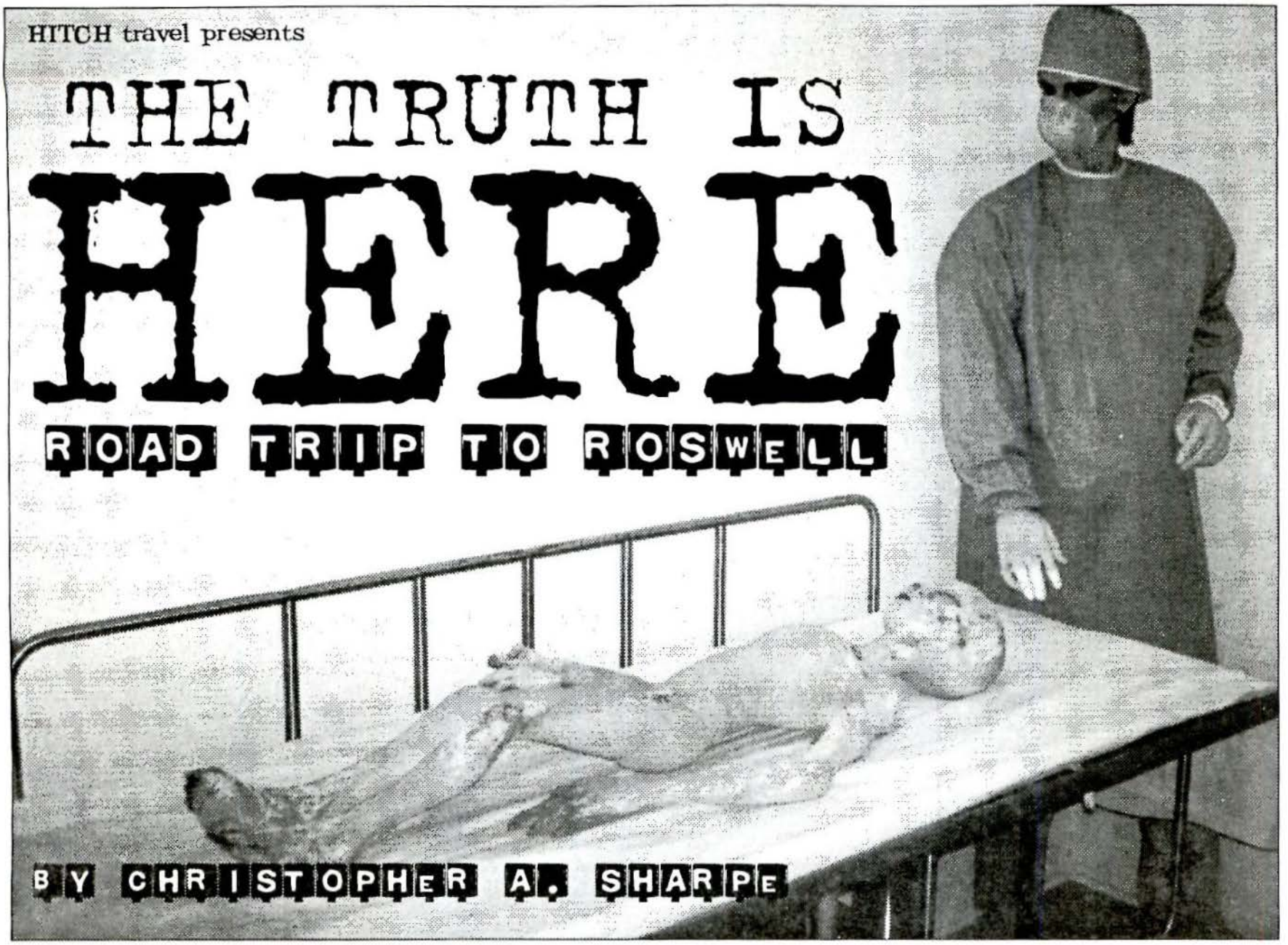
- *Sealed the deal* ——————
- *Rumored* — · — · — · —
- *Family / friend* - - - - - - - -



HITCH travel presents

THE TRUTH IS HERE

ROAD TRIP TO ROSWELL



BY CHRISTOPHER A. SHARPE

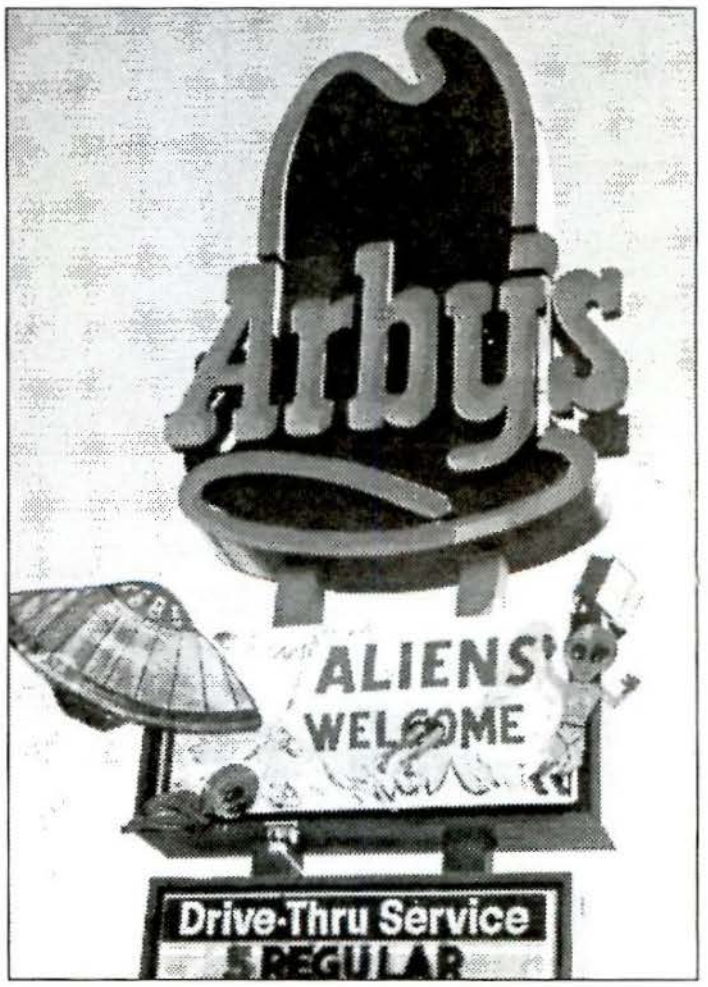
Memorial Day weekend was upon us and it was time to get the hell out of Dodge. The wife and I had been slaving away at new jobs for the past few weeks and were looking for any excuse to get out of town for a few days and break in our new Honda Civic. Limited by a low budget and a three-day time span, I was researching a few potential destinations, when I happened to glance a little lower down on the map. A tiny work beckoned to me ... *Roswell.*

Roswell, N.M. has gained notoriety as the site of a supposed 1947 UFO crash. Several civilians later reported witnessing dead and injured aliens at the crash site. When the military arrived, they captured the craft and aliens and initiated a massive cover-up. In the past few years, with the popularity of *The X-Files* and other sci-fi cult shows, Roswell has become a mecca for UFO freaks and weirdos. It's home to the International UFO Museum and Research Center and there is even an annual UFO festival there each summer to commemorate the crash. The television series *Roswell* has even added to the town's mystique. Since my wife was a big fan of the series, and I was a huge fan of kitschy and bizarre tourist traps, we decided that Roswell was an ideal destination.

We hit the road Friday after work and blazed across the flatlands of the southwest. Due to exhaustion, we stopped in Lubbock, Texas and spent the night at a noisy La Quinta Inn. The next morning, after raiding the continental breakfast area, we were on the road again, leaving Texas and entering the New Mexico desert. The highway cut through a couple of very small towns that consisted of little more than a convenience store, a Mexican restaurant and a few rusting trailers. Other than that, we were in the middle of nowhere. Aside from an occasional passing car, the only visible life were the cows that dotted the landscape – ripe pickings for any alien malcontents.

Just after noon, we arrived in Roswell. The outskirts offered no hint of any supernatural or extraterrestrial phenomena – just an abandoned gas station and a trailer park with overgrown lawns. As we got deeper into the town, we began to notice various ranch supply stores. Gradually, we began to see more and more cars and other signs of civilization. Then we hit Main Street.

On Main Street we truly got a feel for



the alien fever that has seized the town. You can't look anywhere without spotting one of the big-eyed, triangular alien faces. Even places as mundane as shoe stores and fast-food restaurants have tried to find an angle to work in the alien theme.

There are almost a dozen shops that cater to the UFO freaks that make regular pilgrimages to the town. (Strangely enough, every single one of these shops sells the same boring trinkets. I expected to come away with some really cool extra-terrestrial swag, but ended up buying nothing.) One of the stores even has a haunted house-type area where you can have your picture taken with aliens in different eerie or commonplace scenarios. Needless to say, it costs an extra five bucks.

Main Street is dotted with carsick Goths and burned-out hippies in *X-Files* T-shirts. The look in these people's eyes betrays the fact that for them this is more than just a road trip -- it's a quasi-spiritual pilgrimage.

The International UFO Museum and Research Center anchors the street. It's impossible to miss the gaudily painted spire of this converted movie theater. A UFO at the top of the sign beckons all to sample the mysteries within.

Admission to the IUFOMRC is free, but donations are gladly accepted. Just inside the front door is a display showcasing plans for an expanded museum. After being handed a bumper sticker and a brochure, we were proudly shown the museum's crown jewel: an alien corpse on an autopsy table.

Sadly, I must report this is not the corpse from the infamous *Alien Autopsy* video. Rather, it's a rubber corpse used in the 1994 cheapie *Roswell*, starring Kyle MacLachlan. A mannequin dressed as a surgeon stands nearby, preparing to carve into the cadaver. While it may not be a *real* alien, it's still pretty damn cool and sets the tone for the rest of the museum. The entire place is an unnerving blend of scientific documentation and really bad folk art.

The scientific part of the museum makes a pretty good case for the notion that an alien craft really did crash in 1947. The collection includes newpaper articles, government documents, signed statements, photographs and other artifacts that all point to the fact that *something* freaky happened there.

Any credibility the scientific part of the museum might have is utterly destroyed by the vast assortment of amateurish arts and crafts. Most of these depict the traditional big-eyed alien that is all over Roswell; some of them depict UFOs and UFO crashes. A few are great specimens of frustrated goth art with aliens wearing inverted crucifixes. The one thing these pieces share is that they all suck. The cheeseball artwork actually made even me begin to doubt the existence of aliens.

After getting our UFO fix, we drove around Roswell to see if there was anything else worth checking out. After cruising for about 45 minutes, the only thing that seemed to be happening was a car show in the K-Mart parking lot. The art museum (which supposedly has a very nice collection) was just about to close and we decided we were too tired anyway. After eating some very bad Chinese food for dinner, we headed back to the hotel, shot some pool and retreated to our room for a good night's sleep.

The next day we hit the road again, putting Roswell behind us and heading south to Carlsbad for a spellunking adventure deep into the guano-encrusted bowels of the earth. Ultimately, Roswell is very much worth a stop if you are passing through this godforsaken part of the country, but it probably isn't worth making a special trip unless you're a UFO junkie or a writer for **HITCH**. If you're looking to kill time in a little white trash town, there are probably better places much closer to home.

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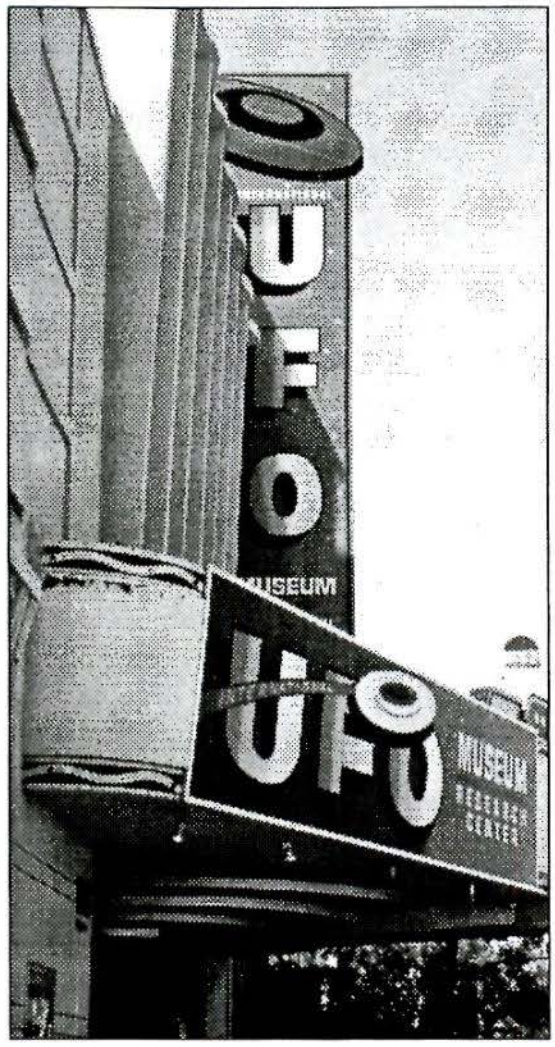
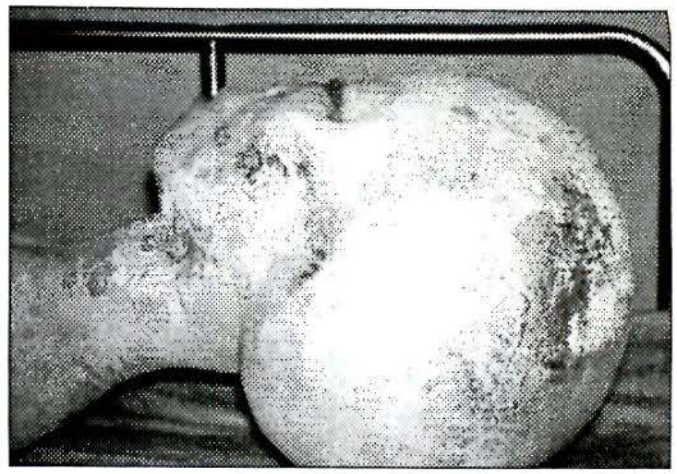




OPPOSITE PAGE • (top) The alien autopsy scene from the International UFO Museum and Research Center. (bottom) Even Arby's gets into the act in Roswell. **THIS PAGE** • (left) The exterior to the IUFOMRC. (right top) A close-up of a battered and bruised alien. (right bottom) A strange display in which a stuffed alien stands peacefully in front of a mural depicting the 1947 crash (complete with dead aliens).

REALITY vs THE WB

The town of Roswell is a far cry from the quaint town depicted on the WB television show of the same name. Wisely, the producers of the television show decided to avoid any adherence to reality. • First of all, I didn't see anyone that looked like Katherine Heigl. (And I *was* looking.) The populace seems to be pretty evenly divided between ranchers and Hispanics. There are also the oddballs who run the alien shops and the aforementioned goofy tourists. • One of the set pieces of the television show is the very hip Crashdown restaurant. Strangely enough, there is no UFO-themed restaurant in Roswell; just the typical fast-food chains and some dimly lit diners which serve New Mexico's own very strange version of Mexican food: heavy on the red sauce, light on the cheese. • Another one of the series' main locations is the neon-lit UFO Museum, which is filled with alien sculptures and a large recreation of the crash. In reality, the UFO Museum is lit by dingy fluorescent lights and the exhibits are mainly photos and documents tacked to bulletin boards. • Our visit to Roswell proved once again that *everything* is better in TV-land!

HAVE YOU PLAYED ATARI TODAY?

BY ROD LOTT

I could tell you my level of excitement reached fever pitch when we went to the store to buy our beloved Atari 2600, but I'd be lying.

Because it didn't happen that way. It was the summer of 1980, and my brother and I were dying to have an Atari, which was at the time, new to the market. The appeal of the Sears hand-held *Pong* set hooked up to an old black-and-white TV had waned long ago, and Atari was just beginning to become a household name.

Therefore, we wanted it in *our* household.

So my dad struck us a deal: My brother and I would mow yards. Whatever money we made, we put in a coffee can next to the microwave. For every dollar we earned, he'd match it. Before we knew it, we'd have enough to welcome Atari into the Lott family.

And he was right. (Truth be told, I think he jumped the gun and put more bucks in than we had.) It seemed like just a matter of days when he surprised us one evening after dinner with the mother lode: a brand-new Atari 2600 Video Computer System, consisting simply of the sleek black console with fake wood paneling, two joysticks and a cartridge entitled *Combat*, the tank game that came standard with each unit.

Aside from *Combat*, Dad had bought *Surround* and the arcade classic *Space Invaders*.

Life was never the same.

According to the Atari Historical Society, the Atari 2600 was born in Grass Valley, Calif. when programmers sought to design a console with games built internally into the unit. Of course, we know that initial plan was ditched for the cartridge route, and it hit shelves in 1977.

In these early days, the cartridges numbered but a few – *Combat*, *Outlaw* and the venerable *Pong*. Then someone got the bright idea to license a coin-operated game. Not just any coin-op, either, but *Space Invaders*, the game that was eating quarters like mad from coast to coast, and the Atari revolution began.

"It was the first cartridge-based system," said Russell McPherson, owner of Joystick Jack's in Edmond, which sells Atari 2600 games. "This was the first system you could hook up to your TV and play an infinite number of games. And there's some cool games for it.

"The graphics may suck, but *Missile Command* and *Pitfall* – there's just some awesome games on there!"

Supposedly, the word "Atari" is Japanese for "go" – a word as apt as any to describe its mercurial rise.

For a period of a few years in the early '80s, Atari was *the* thing, as Pokémon is today (though the latter's appeal likely will prove to be much shorter-lived). Entire Saturdays were spent playing Atari with friends, and outdoor play became less and less frequent, much to the dismay of parental units.

In fact, that entire period of one's childhood can be measured in Atari milestones:

• The day Dillard's ran a full-page ad in the newspaper announcing it was taking pre-orders for the long-awaited game-to-end-all-games, *Pac-Man*.

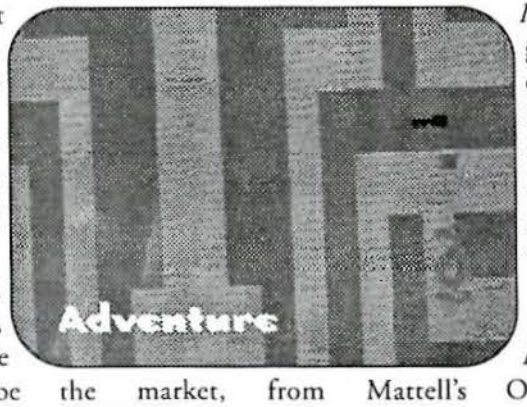
• The day world leaked to local news stations about *Custer's Revenge*, a crude adult game in which the object is to avoid having Gen. Custer be shot by arrows so that he may rape the naked Native American princess tied to a pole. The media had a field day; parents gasped, then breathed a sigh of relief when they realized you didn't have it.

• The day the first commercial for an Atari cartridge appeared on TV, advertising the space-bug game known as *Yars' Revenge*, complete with its own catchy jingle: *"Yars' Revenge is a game from Atari / Have you played Atari today?"*

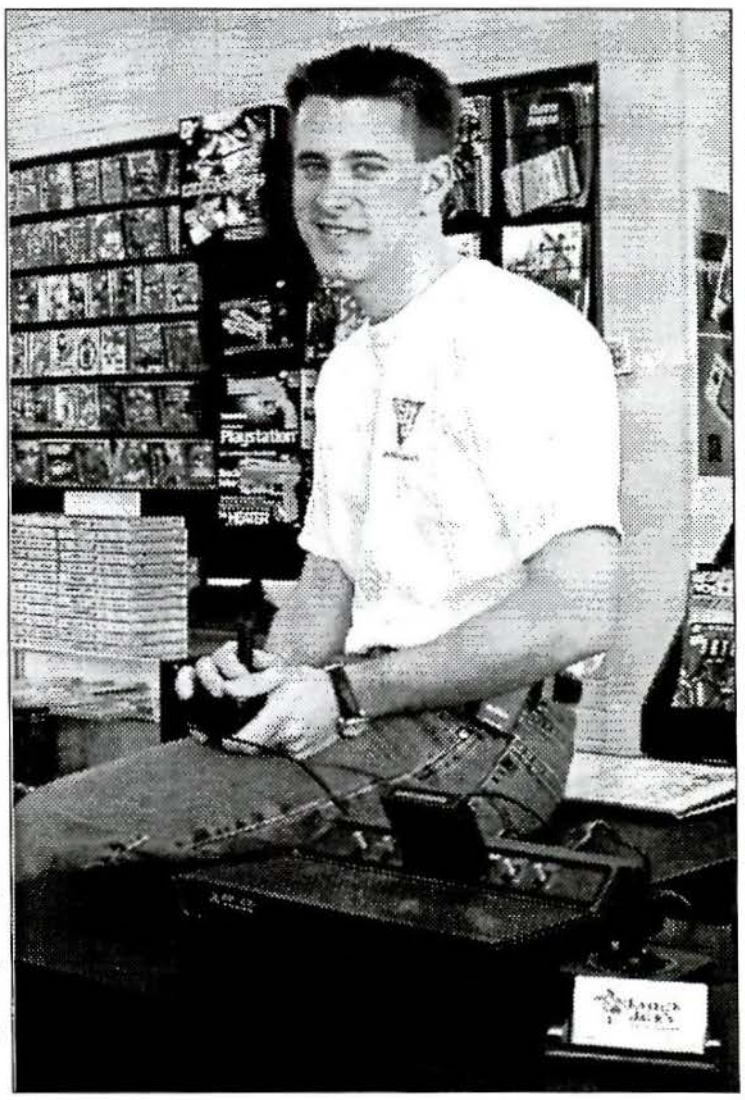
• The day *Pac-Man* finally came out, and everyone was disappointed.

• The day Mom sold the Atari with all 50 or so cartridges in a garage sale for about $20 – a move that may have seemed great at the time, but for which you cursed yourself years later, after graduating college, full of nostalgia.

Kids' disenchantment with Atari hit in the mid-'80s, after a flood of copycat systems crowding



the market, from Mattell's Intellivision to Coleco's Colecovision. The influx of competing systems, not to mention the glut of terrible games being made for the Atari by third parties, helped crash the market altogether. The popularity of home computing with affordable machines from Texas Instruments and Radio Shack's TRS-80 didn't help.



Despite his wide selection of cutting-edge video games, Russell McPherson, owner of Joystick Jack's, still sells Atari 2600s to nostalgic video game enthusiasts.

By 1984, home video games were all but dead, until a few years later when the Nintendo got a whole new generation hooked. But it was a glorious time while it lasted.

"I enjoyed playing *Sneak & Peek*, which was a hide-and-seek game where you had to find the other playing hiding somewhere in this house," said Steve Hunt, former Atari enthusiast. "I also liked *Porky's*, because you could peek into the shower and see women's boobies."

McPherson harbors a fondness for *Warlords*, *Swordquest*, *Pitfall* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Of the latter, he said, "That was *awesome*. It just had so much to it and it was hard to beat. Most of the games were so easy to beat or you could never beat them, like *Asteroids*, which keeps going faster and faster. But *Raiders* was the perfect level of difficulty. It wasn't the same thing over and over."

Admitted Curt Vendel, who runs the Atari Historical Society website from his home in Staten Island, N.Y., "*Adventure* got me hooked on Atari in the first place. Three castles, three dragons and an annoying bat that would steal a key from you just when you were about to open a castle and leave a vicious red dragon in its place to chase after you and kill you.

"That was *the* game to play."

Indeed, *Adventure* is considered to be the *crème de la crème* of all Atari games, if the Internet is any indication. It remains the favorite of many – yours truly included – and is fondly remembered via tribute sites and shareware versions (see sidebar).

Today, for whatever reason, the Atari 2600 still holds appeal and can claim its own loyal cult.

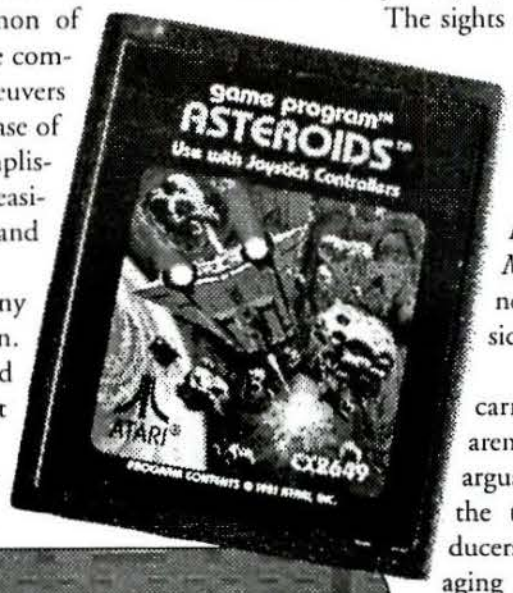
"I would say just because it was the first, and video games are so big now," McPherson reasoned. "It's a big enough market now where you can have nostalgia things like this go over well."

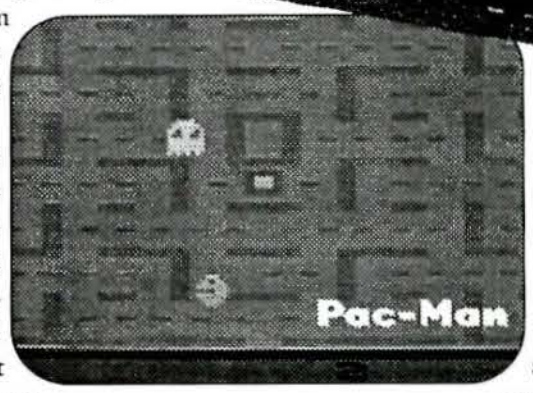
"For one, it was the first successful home console that truly launched the home video gaming revolution," said Vendel. "It is also an '80s icon which is a sought-after item in today's retro circles. The other reason is that a lot of 30-somethings have, along with the rest of the gaming world, grown bored with all the overly complex games available today, and long to recapture a piece of their childhood in the simple, yet addictive games that the Atari 2600 provides."

Indeed, the Atari succeeded because it was so simple. The joy-

stick essentially allowed for only five moves: up, down, left and right and shoot. Many of those who grew up on Atari shun the games of today – such as the phenomenon of *Mortal Kombat* – whose multiple combinations of buttons and maneuvers are too difficult to be fun. The ease of playing Atari, along with its simplistic graphics and pleasing colors, easily translated into fun for all ages and skill levels.

"The Atari doesn't have any forgiveness," said McPherson. "You either hit it or you miss, and it's something that we can beat our kids at."





At Joystick Jack's, McPherson sees mostly college students and those in their early 20s coming in to purchase 2600 games.

"It's usually the hardcore game collectors, these people that literally have 12 systems hooked up to a TV," he said. "It's the kids that have always grown up with video games and want to have every system, and the Atari is not something they can find working in nice shape very often. They like to have one of everything. They might only play it five or six times a year, but it's just the fact that they have it."

For those that can't find the original system or accessories, have no fear – the Internet has preserved the experience for you. Both Mac and PC owners alike can download a program named *Stella* – an emulator that recreates the Atari 2600 experience right on your desktop. Various websites (see sidebar) carry the ROMs – or cartridges – so that yesterday's games can come alive for you today and tomorrow. The ROMs take up an average of a scant 4KB apiece, yet provide authentic 2600 play. The sights and sounds are down to a T.

All told, a little more than 500 Atari 2600 ROMs exist on the 'Net, from old favorites (*Donkey Kong*) to rarities (*Kool-Aid Man*) and titles that you never even knew existed (see sidebar).

The renewed interest has carried over into the retail arena, too, with Activision – arguably considered the best of the third-party cartridge producers – making a mint by packaging their 2600 classics on two best-selling CD-ROM collections, containing originals of everything from *Spider Fighter* and *Barnstorming* to *Stampede* and *Fishing Derby*.

Similarly, Hasbro just pressed a CD-ROM of *Pong*, of all things, and it's a hit. And if the simplest game of all-time can move copies some 25 years later, who knows where the craze will lead next.

"I think that Atari stuff will become more and more valuable," McPherson said. "It's real hard to find them because they don't make parts for them anymore. It's harder to find good working ones with controllers, especially joysticks."

Vendel believes that "the Atari 2600 will always hold a firm place in many people's hearts and minds. People wanted to play at home what they played in the arcades, and Atari was the one game system that had almost all of them."

H

SELECT ONE

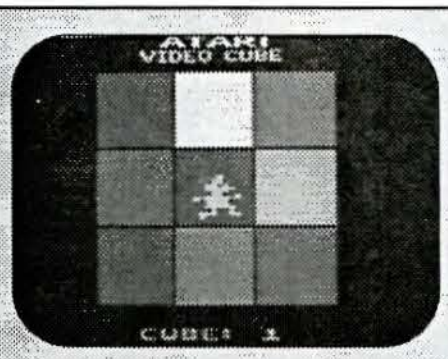
There are tons of Internet sites dedicated to the Atari 2600, but following of some of the best and most notable.

- The Atari Historical Society (*www.atari-history.com*) – A historical overview of all things Atari.
- Stella (*www4.ncsu.edu/~bwmott/www/2600/*) – Download Stella, the Atari emulator, for Mac or PC.
- Atari 2600 ROM Image and Emulator Page (*www.angelfire.com/ab/atari2600/*) – After you have Stella, go here for all the cartridges.
- History of Video Games Homepage (*www.videogames.org*) – This site also carries the Atari 2600 ROMs, as well as ones for Atari 5200, Intellivision and Colecovision.
- Classic Gaming (*www.classicgaming.com*) – An all-around great site for information not only on Atari, but other beloved brands of the era.
- Atari Gaming Headquarters (*www.atarihq.com*) – Largely an informational site, with helpful maps to popular cartridges *Superman* and *Adventure*.
- Atari.Org (*www.atari.org*) – The self-proclaimed "definitive resource" for Atari info.
- Indenture (*www.clark. net/pub/vgr/indenture.html*) – For those who want *Adventure* without messing with an emulator, here's a freeware version for PCs.
- Hasbro Interactive (*www.hasbrointeractive.com/atari*) – Buy *Pong* on CD-ROM, or play Shockwave games of *Centipede*, *Frogger* and *Super Breakout*.
- Hozer Video Games (*www.netway.com/~hozervideo/index.html*) – Hozer sells real cartridges, as well as new games for the 2600 created by fans.

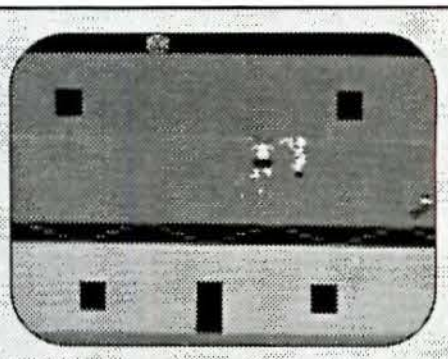
THE ATARI YOU *NEVER* KNEW!

Not every Atari 2600 cartridge was a household item. Here's a few of the rarest, weirdest and wildest games, all available on the web.

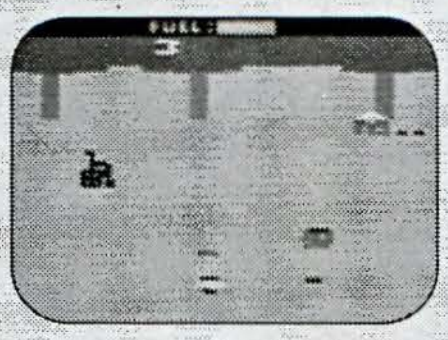
- **Atari Video Cube** – All the excitement of the Rubik's Cube, only on your TV. Hey, wake up!
- **Beat 'Em and Eat 'Em** – You control a naked woman so that she catches the ... um, just trust us: The title says it all.
- **Chase the Chuckwagon** – From Purina!
- **Dishaster** – Spin plates upon poles. Don't let them fall.
- **Halloween** – You're the babysitter, and that's Michael Myers, and if you don't run away, he will stab your head off.
- **The A-Team** – A crudely animated head of Mr. T shoots bad guys. I pity the fool who paid for this one.
- **The Texas Chainsaw Massacre** – You're Leatherface, scouring the front yard for some nubile flesh to tear into with your power tool of choice. But watch out for all those wheelchairs!
- **X-Man** – If you avoid having your tallywhacker removed by the pair of scissors, you get to do something that you just should *not* be allowed to do on an Atari.



Atari Video Cube



Halloween



Texas Chainsaw

X-Man

BY ROD LOTT

THE BEAT GOES ON...

I'm fascinated by the criminal element, but only from a distance, and even then preferably with an armed companion at my side.

A recent Memorial Day weekend ride-along with one police officer proved to be, as always, a thoroughly interesting and entertaining way to kill eight hours.

The cop – a three-year veteran of the force – did not want to be identified for this story. Instead, he asked that I refer to him as "one of the city's finest, or better yet, the city's finest."

I have referred to him here on out simply as "the officer."

On our first call, no crime even had been committed. Rather, a woman was worried about her delusional 89-year-old mother, whose new meds had triggered a rash of hallucinations that either would make LSD freaks swear off the drug or would make a really good episode of *Twin Peaks*.

She had seen water flowing through the house and balls bouncing off the walls, so she escaped to the front porch, where she saw little girls running in her yard and threw the TV remote at them. It was them, after all, who caused all the madness inside.

Of course, there were no bouncing balls or running water, nor any little girls in the yard. EMS came to take the woman to the hospital for observation.

There's nothing funny about this. I only relate the story because it serves as conclusive proof of a long-standing theory of mine: Nothing good can came out of watching *Diagnosis Murder*.

Soon we were dispatched to West Burton, where an anonymous caller had reported a man huffing paint outside and yelling. Indeed, we found someone extremely high, but didn't catch him in the act of huffing, much less yelling.

His name was William, and he lived in a run-down house that had been converted into three run-down apartments. William was seated on his porch, grinning like the Cheshire Cat, albeit the Cheshire Cat with his brain loaded with paint fumes. He wore no shirt, allowing us to admire his many fine tattoos, which included a replica of the *Heavy Metal* poster artwork on his chest, and the now *de rigeur* marijuana leaf on his left arm.

"Have you ever been arrested before?" the officer asked him, somewhat rhetorically.

"Yeah."

"How many times?"

"Heh – you'd need a computer."

There was nothing to arrest him for, however, as destroying brain cells in the privacy of one's home is no threat to the public. The officer instructed William to just keep the party inside, which his fairly sober friend – a dead ringer for John Oates of "Hall &" fame – said he would make sure happened.

Daisy, the three-toothed landlord, stepped out to take something to the garbage. The officer asked Daisy if William was her tenant.

"Yes, he is," she said, "but I wish he wasn't."

We would be back.

THE BLOTTER

Number of incidents	13	Traffic stops	2
Disturbances	5	Number of shirtless guys	2
Domestic violence	1	(with prosthetic leg)	1
Audible alarm	1	Number of John Oates	
Welfare check	2	sightings	2
Self-check	2	Potty breaks	3

At an apartment building on West Douglas, a drunken apartment manager was making threats to tenants.

"Oh, no," I thought. "Not another call involving an inebriated, shirtless white male."

To my relief, it wasn't. No, this was a call involving an inebriated, shirtless white male with a prosthetic leg.

According to the calling party – two young lovers still wearing their Mr. Goodcents work clothes – the manager, Mark, likes to hit the sauce and berate the residents. A few days ago, he knocked on the door across the hall so hard that he left blood marks. This time, he told one of the tenants that he was going to kick his ass.

("In all these calls, *everyone* says 'I'm gonna kick your ass,'" the officer would say later. "Can't anyone come up with something better? It's such a cliché.")

Mark was so drunk that:

• When asked his Social Security number, he spouted off only five digits. Twice.

• He said he had been in jail for possession of methamphetamines for two years; he went in one year ago and just got out last month. You do the math.

• When asked whose hardcore porno mags were spilling out of his apartment, he said they belonged to the girl who called. "She's one of them bisexuals, y'know." The next time he was asked whose they were, he said, "Mine." The third time, "I don't know."

• He didn't realize he should have done us all a favor by putting on a shirt.

Threats were in the air, apparently, as we were dispatched to a home on West 2nd, where the owner had been told by her ex-boyfriend via phone that he was coming over in 10 minutes to "kick your ass." Naturally, she waited 25 minutes before contacting authorities.

Her home was small and in poor shape, but her living room stocked with the best TV and stereo equipment money can buy (or rent, as the officer said, Rent-a-Center stuff mysteriously "disappears" all the time). As she told us about the threat, she also let us in on more than we needed (or cared) to know. For example:

• "I've had nine pregnancies."

• "I've never used birth control. I always lose 'em after the third month."

• "I'm opening my own home-based business in beads."

About the only relevant info we got out of her was that this same no-good ex-boyfriend had broken her nose once.

"Did you report that, Kelli?" the officer asked her.

"No," she said. "I never did. I guess I should have."

Damn straight. It probably also would be wise to get rid of her license plate frame reading "PORN STAR" and the Hoover logo sticker oh-so-cleverly altered to read "HOOKER."

An audible alarm held some promise, as the alarm in question was at Babes, a local "gentleman's club." Truth be told, one can find neither a babe nor a gentleman among the premises at any given time.

The establishment had not yet opened, and the Babes bouncer let us in. He looked utterly confused at how to operate the establishment's alarm system, which was a dead giveaway given his sleeveless T and backward ball cap.

As we left, I noted a terminal on the bar had been customized with a screensaver that read, "COREY EAT'S PUSSY VERY WELL."

We were called back to Kelli's, presumably because her ex had called again. But we think it was really because her young son had ventured to the Texaco and bought us some gum.

Driving around waiting for a call, we spotted William's friend Oates at a scuz-laden tavern called Smokin' Joe's Lounge. He was outside, as was a man in a wheelchair with his head slumped over, apparently crying.

"Let's circle around," the officer said. "If he's drunk, we can get him for being a pedestrian under the influence."

The first thing the officer asked Oates was why he wasn't partying with William.

"Oh, man, he got outta my control," he said. "I couldn't control him none, so I had to leave. The only way I could've controlled him is if I knock his head with my knuckles."

"What's with your friend here?" the officer asked, referring to the handicapped individual.

"Oh, he's okay. He's just had too much to drink, that's all, so he had to open his colostomy bag and let some out."

Venturing down a busy street, we spotted the all-too-surreal sight of a toddler walking right in the middle of the intersection. The kid couldn't have been one year old.

As we got out of the car, the toddler's older sister rushed to snatch her up.

"Hey, where do you live?" the officer asked.

"It's okay, we were just trying to get our dog," the girl said. "Is this a problem?"

"Hell, yes, it's a problem. Show me where you live."

Hesitantly, she did, leading us

to her humble abode. Their dog, a black lab with some sort of mummy wrapping tied around its hindquarters, followed along.

"Go get your mom," the officer instructed. We waited on the porch.

Mom never showed, but several minutes later, Dad hobbled to the door with bloodshot eyes, and the officer explained what had happened.

"I could've hit that kid, sir," the officer said. "He doesn't stand but yay high."

"Oh, I'm sorry, officer. I certainly do appreciate it," the man stated, with the same sincere but unconcerned lack of urgency one would use to respond when told his headlights were left on. "I was just sleepin' back here."

"Well, if you're going to be sleeping, you need to let the older kids know not to let him walk off into the intersection. You know how busy that street is."

"I sure do, officer. I apologize," he said. (Translation: "I sure hope you're buying this because I don't want you to come in here and find my blunts. And you don't think I could really sleep with six kids in the house and all this rap music blaring, do you?")

A call came across the radio that a woman was passed out in a car, and a white male was just seen leaving the car buttoning his shirt. Furthermore, two Hispanic males were walking toward the car.

Sounded like a case of rape and sloppy-seconds-to-be, but upon arrival, it turned out to be anything but. There was indeed a woman in a car, but she was awake and conscious, although it looked as though she had peed her pants.

As for the male buttoning his shirt, his drawers were hiked down somewhat. But that's all because he was large and had just taken a trip – literally – down a stairwell and broke his ankle. His foot was hanging at an unnatural angle, flopping in the mild wind. One could see the bone about to peek through.

Despite the gruesome sight, the man seemed not to mind it too much as he lay on the porch, surrounded by the aforementioned Hispanic males who were there to help.

"Sir, doesn't that hurt?" the officer asked.

"Yeah, it hurts like a bitch," said Flopsy Mopsy, his foot now performing like a weather vane.

William was up to his ol' huffing and yelling tricks again, according to the caller. Upon our arrival, though, the still-shirtless William wasn't doing much of anything except getting his ass kicked by a neighbor.

The neighbor claimed it was all in self-defense, as William emerged from his apartment with a pair of scissors, Mother Bates-style, saying, "I'm gonna kill you!" William didn't deny having scissors, but said he only threatened to use them when Neighbor Boy wouldn't get out of his house.

Both their stories had holes wider than the neighbor's sister's ass, so they both ended up in handcuffs and en route to a night in jail. William was lucky to have the added charge of sniffing carburetor cleaner in addition to the disorderly.

While being searched, the neighbor was found to have nothing much in his possession, save for a *sweet* wallet bearing an illustration of a silhouette of a busty woman in recline, seen on a million mudflaps.

By the time they were behind bars, it was a night.

But our story doesn't end there. The very next night, our friendly officer crossed paths with two of this memorable night's most noted miscreants.

First, he ran into William coming out of a QuikTrip.

"Hey, William, do you remember me?" he asked.

William said he did not.

"That's probably because you were hyped up on carburetor cleaner and booze the last time you saw me," the officer said, to which William replied, "Yep, I probably was."

And who should be sitting in front of QuikTrip begging passers-by for money but the angry apartment manager Mark, with his prosthetic leg lying next to him.

The QuikTrip manager wanted him kicked off the property, but Mark wanted to argue about it.

"You have exactly 30 seconds to get off the property or I'll take you to jail for criminal trespassing," the officer ordered.

"Man," Mark replied, "I've only got one leg. You know it's gonna take me more than 30 seconds."

"Mark, put your leg on and hop on home," the officer said.

Mark complied.

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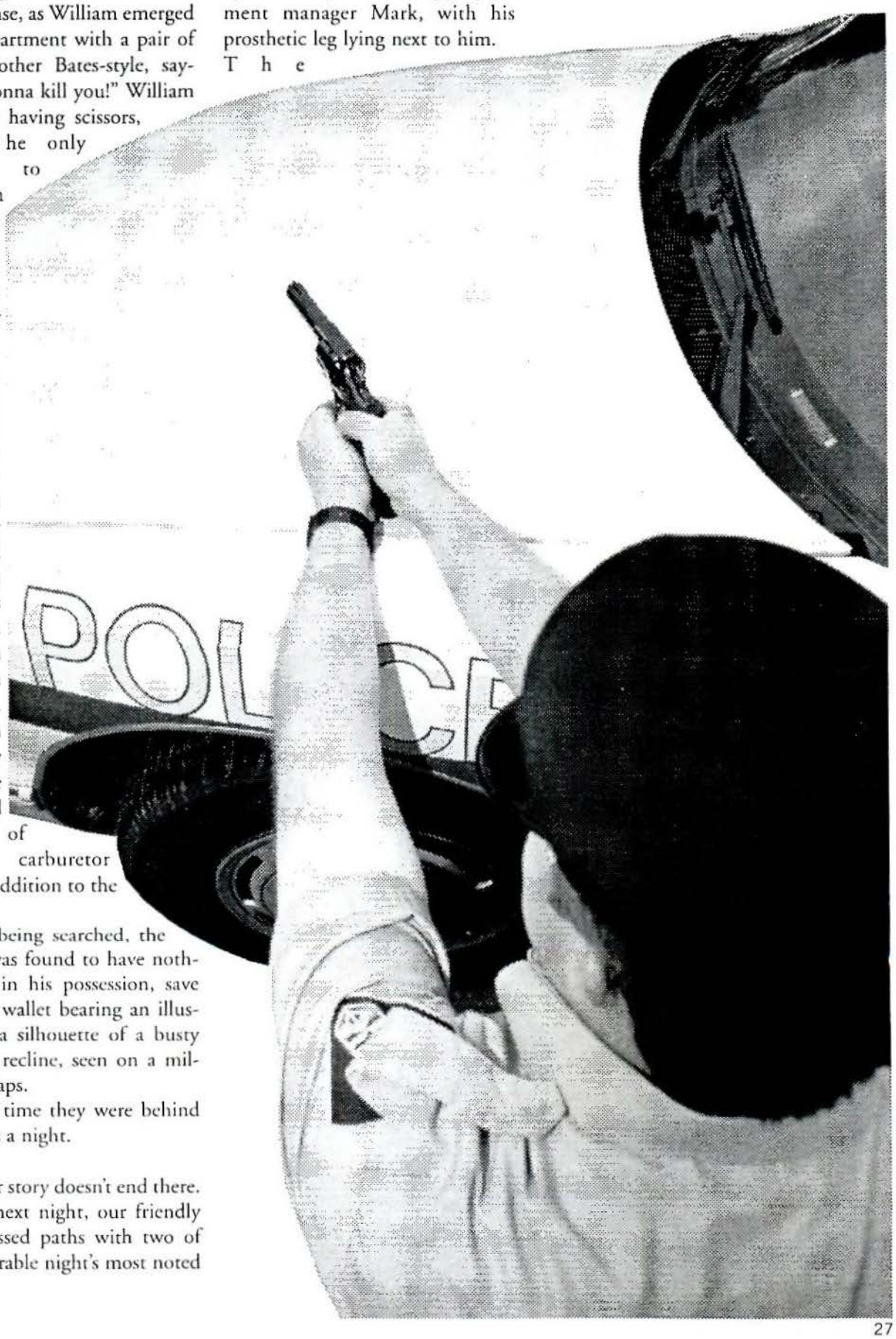
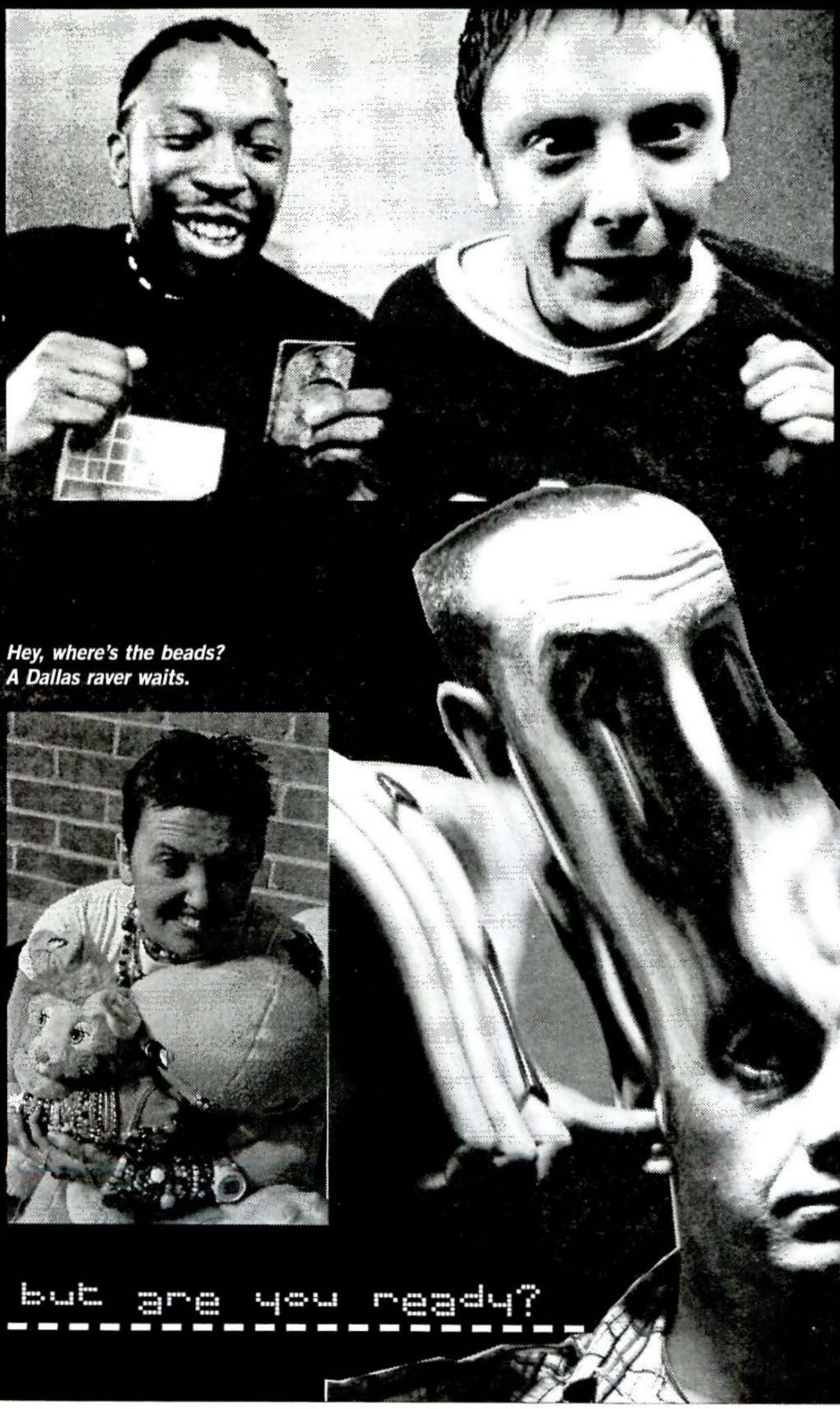


the rave scene moves into the mainstream



Shaun Parkes and John Simm star in Miramax's import **Human Traffic.**

Hey, where's the beads? A Dallas raver waits.

Fatboy Slim: King of the dancefloor.

but are you ready?

Look no further than your multiplex: It appears that the rave scene has moved firmly into the mainstream.

No fewer than three rave-based films are currently unspooling in theaters nationwide: Miramax's *Trainspotting*-lite *Human Traffic*, the Sundance fave *Groove* and the documentary *Better Living Through Circuitry*, a self-proclaimed "digital odyssey into electronic dance culture."

"*Better Living Through Circuitry* was a film that from the outset was intended to challenge the traditional indie film concepts of marketing and distribution. From the beginning, we felt the project would need to philosophically embody the concepts of the digital culture we were trying to capture," said one of the film's producers.

"We also felt the film was only the beginning, not the end of a process we had begun."

Thus, supplementing the film are a website with streaming content, the requisite CD soundtrack and an upcoming DVD release, which should contain more scenes than the theatrical cut, as more than 200 hours of raw footage were shot initially.

In keeping with the theme of "empowerment through technology," the production is decidedly digital, utilizing some of the latest digital filmmaking equipment. It was all filmed on a tiny Sony VX1000 digital video camera hauled into raves by the director via backpack. Virtually all

better living through raving?

post-production was performed in a spare bedroom of the producer's apartment.

The film itself is a fast-edit mishmash of interviews with techno godfathers and we-were-there rave footage, featuring the somewhat-comprehensible blurbs from the glassy-eyed participants. It is the former that gives *Better Living* credibility, although the interviewees can range from the entertaining (The Crystal Method, recalling how they had to break the news to their mothers that they were starting a band named for an illicit drug) to the wholly annoying (DJ Frankie Bones, who says he "eats, sleeps and shits techno," which does nothing to make the scene more appealing).

Clearly, the music is the driving force, echoed by DJ Spooky, Moby and Kraftwerk's Wolfgang Flur. The "scene" itself seems to be a mere by-product, or even a contradiction – the ravers babble about being able to express their individuality and be themselves, yet they all look the same, what with the baby pacifiers and gripped glow sticks.

"The raver image, with all the beads, angel wings and glitter and such, is way overplayed," argued Joe, a 15-year-old rave attendee from the Midwest. "It's not so much to be 'unique,' but it's for acceptance."

Joe believes the rave scene's move toward the mainstream may prove to be a double-edge sword.

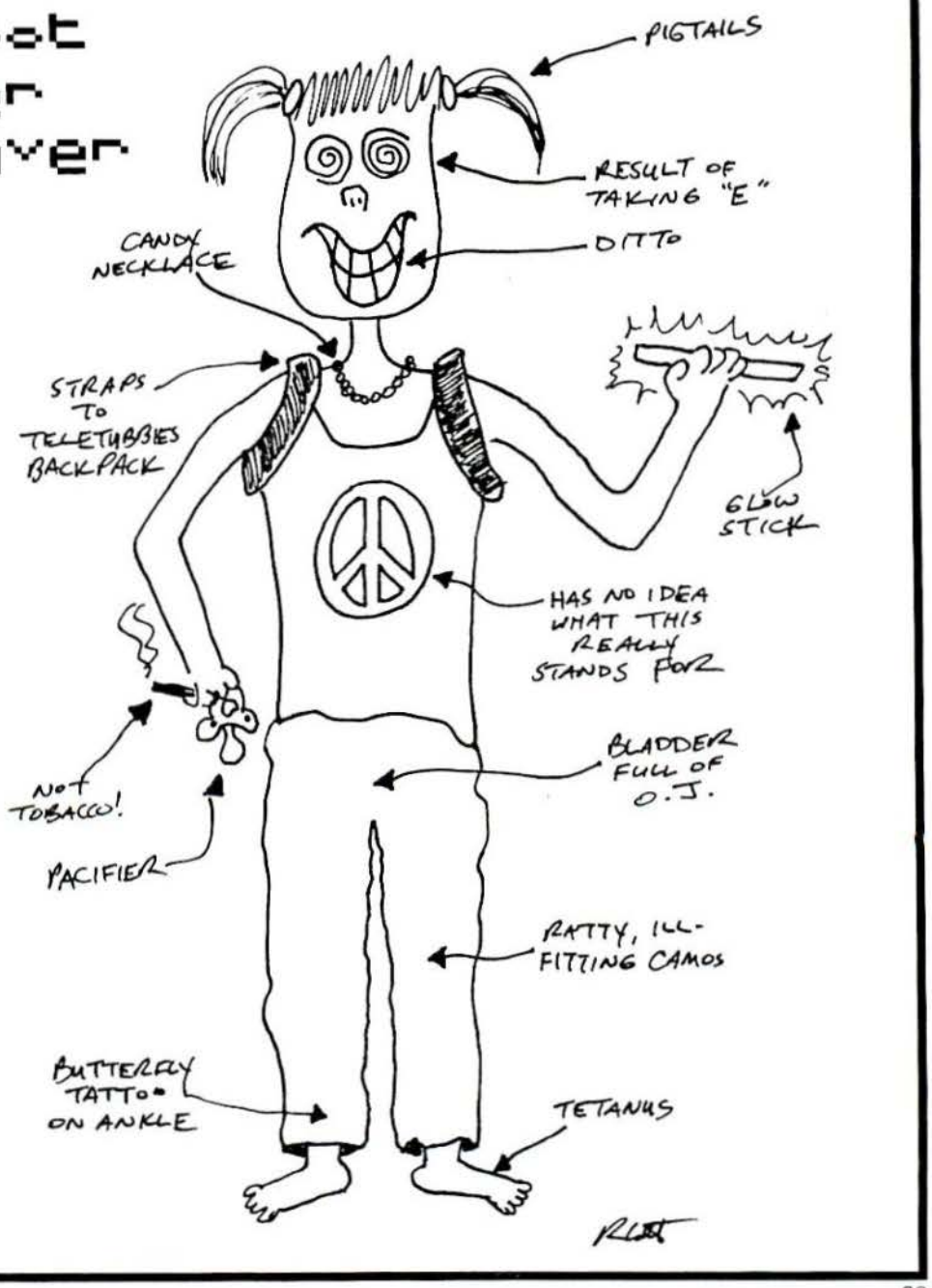
"It's positive in the way it would make it larger, and bigger DJs would be booked," he said. "But it would also work counter, being that more people would come just to use illegal substances. Then we would most definitely get negative press.

"In June, I met a kid who was on seven pills of Ecstasy. He was completely infantile. He chewed *violently* on a pacifier and sat in a corner all night."

H

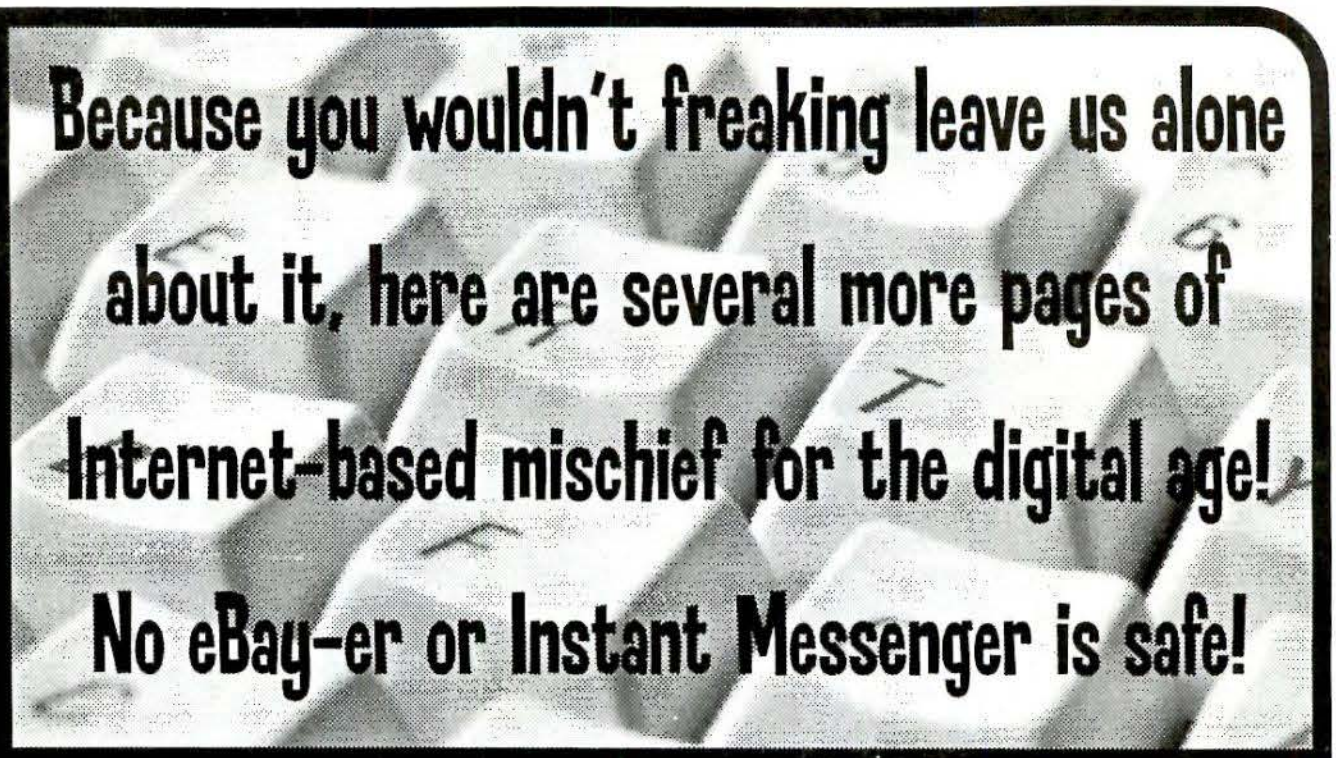
by mad lad

spot yer raver



eBay Pranks

By Rod Lott & Ken Davis


Because you wouldn't freaking leave us alone
about it, here are several more pages of
Internet-based mischief for the digital age!
No eBay-er or Instant Messenger is safe!

EBAY SCHMEBAY!

The auction site eBay isn't just for posting items for sale, though that comprises a big chunk o' cash for the e-tailer. Users also can post notices for items they wish to purchase. Armed with a freshly minted Hotmail account that was mysteriously deleted by the powers-that-be shortly after this prank was born, we sought to help these lost souls find the items they so desired.

For some reason, they weren't too keen on our efforts. **—Ken Davis**

Adult Diapers Needed. Reusable (New or used/washed) or Disposable. Medium and Large sizes. Looking for super deals on as many as I can get!

Are you in luck! My dear old Pappy has a basement full of those things! I can't guarantee how clean they are, though. He doesn't get around real well and just tosses 'em downstairs when he's done with them. Make me a deal. I'll get on the horn to U-Haul and see how much a truck will cost.

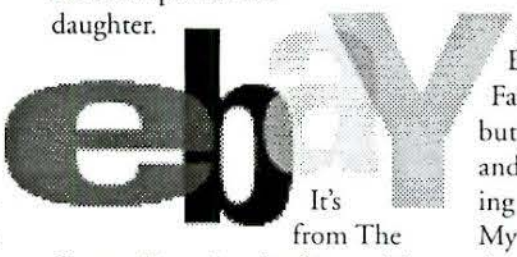
Serious replies only please :)

I'm as serious as can be. I'll even sort out the really dirty ones so you don't have to. Let me know!

I am looking for the containers CHUBS BABY WIPES come in. They are the stacking blocks. I am wanting to get a lot of them together and if anyone has any they want to sell at a reasonable price, please contact me.

THANKS!!!!

I'm guessing you have a toddler running around the house. Boy, do I have a deal for you! I don't have any of those containers, but my sister bought the CUTEST little romper for her daughter.



It's from The Gap and is red and white and has a matching hat. She looks like a little Shirley Temple when she's wearing it. Anyway, I'm sure I could "sneak" it out of the house and mail it to you. I'll only charge you $20 for it. Trust me, you would be thinking to yourself, "I can't believe I only paid $20 for this adorable romper!" Email me back with your address and I'll send it right away.

Prison and/or Jail related items. Clothing, inmate manuals, letterhead, restraints, photographs, just about anything along that line. ONLY REAL ITEMS Please; I'm not interested in counterfit or reproduction.

I've got a genuine, homemade shank my dad used to knife a guy while incarcerated in the El Dorado Correctional Facility. He's still doing time, but gave it to me as a keepsake and family heirloom. I'd be willing to part with it for a fair price. My Mom doesn't like me having that thing in the house anyway. Let me know.

Thanks, but no.

Are you absolutely sure? All the blood is off of it and it isn't being held as evidence in his trial anymore. I'll make you a really good deal on it. How does $20 sound?

Thank you, no.

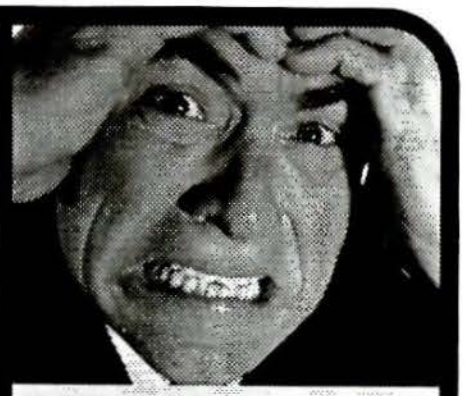
Okay, okay. You drive a hard bargain. How about $10?

INSTANT MESSAGE MADNESS!

Why can't you people just* leave me alone?** ***It seems every time I sign on to AOL, some nimwit wants to carry on a conversation, thinking that I'm someone I'm clearly not. Even despite my occasional efforts to convince them otherwise, they still won't believe me.

And yet, for some reason, I take enough time out of my busy day to harass them back. Here are seven recent, unedited transcripts – all from chats uninitiated by me. **—Rod Lott**

ATony2005: who is this
RLott: who is this?
ATony2005: anthony
RLott: From the year 2005???
ATony2005: who is 6thisnooo\
RLott: 6thisnooo\? I do not understand your language.
ATony2005: who is this
RLott: If you don't know, why are you IMing me?
ATony2005: i dont know your on my buddy list
RLott: Then you probably shouldn't have me on there.
RLott: I don't know any Anthonys.
ATony2005: WHO IS THIS
RLott: DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT
ATony2005: WHOI IS IT
RLott: You get three guesses.
ATony2005: ANGELA
RLott: "WHOI" am I?
ATony2005: I MEANT WHO
ATony2005: R U
ATony2005: ANGELA
RLott: WHY ARE YOU TALKING SO BIG?
ATony2005: I DONT KNOW
ATony2005: SO ARE YOU ANGELA\
RLott: You are a smart one.
RLott: If you think I'm Angela, why did you have to ask?
ATony2005: I DONT KNOW
ATony2005: *JUST TO MAKE* SURE
ATony2005: RU ANGELA
ATony2005: ?
RLott: Why are you typing in bold italics? It is so hard for me to read.
ATony2005: SORRY
RLott: And all caps just looks like screaming.
ATony2005: fdxgf
ATony2005: is that better
RLott: fdxgf yourself.
ATony2005: what/
RLott: Man, get to the point. I gotta go dump.
ATony2005: LOL
ATony2005: YOU MEAN GO POOP
RLott: Is that a statement or a question? Didn't you go to grade school?
ATony2005: YES
ATony2005: WH;Y
ATony2005: OOPS WHY
RLott: Because you can't punctuate or spell, apparently.
ATony2005: HOW?
RLott: You tell me.
ATony2005: I DONT KNOW
ATony2005: DAMNIT
ATony2005: HOLD ON
ATony2005: OK
RLott: See, there you go. Where's your apostrophe in "DONT"? Or periods after those sentences?
ATony2005: SHUT UP
RLott: And take your CAPS LOCK off. Or is it permanently stuck from your own drool?
ATony2005: WHO IS THIS
RLott: How can I shut up when I am merely typing, and not talking?
RLott: Don't you mean, "Who is this?"
ATony2005: ok
ATony2005: yes
ATony2005: !!!!!!!!!
RLott: No, you mean "Yes."
ATony2005: uhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhgh
RLott: What grades did you get in English class, Anthony?
ATony2005: a's
RLott: Doubt that.
ATony2005: ok f's
ATony2005: why
RLott: Never mind. Write back when I don't have to decipher your messages, okay?
ATony2005: "ok"
ATony2005: "are you happy?"
RLott: Why didn't you capitalize "are" there?
RLott: Are you retarded?
ATony2005: r u
ATony2005: who the hell is this!
RLott: Obviously not, as I can spell. "r u" — geez, what the hell is that?
ATony2005: damnit im gettin sick and tired of your games!
RLott: The line "who the hell is this!" is a question; therefore, it requires a question mark. But since there was none, I guess it does not require an answer.
RLott: Who's im? I thought your name was Anthony.
ATony2005: It is.
RLott: Okay, because you mentioned someone named "im," and that threw me.
ATony2005: Who is this?
RLott: Someone who's better than you in areas of academics.
ATony2005: Who the hell is this?
RLott: I just told you.
ATony2005: Your name perhaps
RLott: Puddin' Tame. Ask me again and I'll tell you the same.
ATony2005: Who is this
ATony2005: ?
RLott: Puddin' Tame. Ask me again and I'll tell you the same.
RLott: Can't you read?
ATony2005: That is not a name.
RLott: Suit yourself.
ATony2005: Obiously I can read if I am righting back!
RLott: Obiously = obviously? Righting = writing? I'm assuming here, Anthony.
RLott: It's nearly 2 p.m. Isn't "Romper Room" about on?
ATony2005: I don't know what that is
RLott: Well, there's the problem.



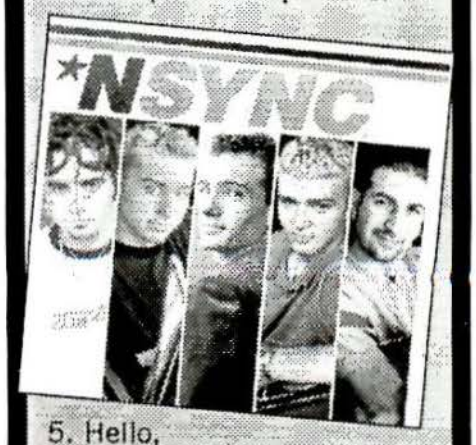
MAKE SOMEONE'S LIFE HELL USING THE INTERNET!

1. Vent your frustrations by talking trash on the subject of your ire on *www.retribution.net*. Brighten your post by uploading the most embarrassing picture of that person you can find.

2. Post nude photos of them on as many binary newsgroups as you can find. The image will outlive him or her.

3. Don't have nude photos? No problem! Open up Adobe Photoshop and doctor some.

4. Give 'em crap – literally – from *www.doodoo.com*. We'll let the company's mission statement speak for itself: "We beautifully gift wrap horse shit to your least favorite person or persons."

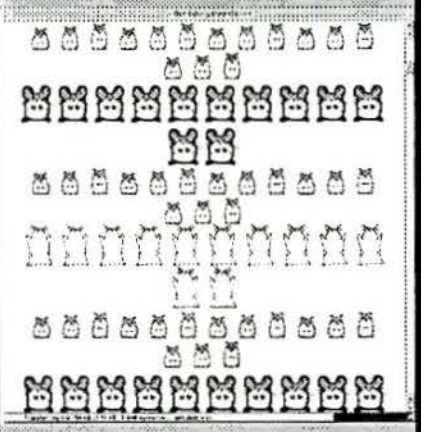


5. Hello, *www.columbiahouse.com*? This person would like to order endless copies of 'N Sync CDs under as many accounts as you'll let him open, using lots and lots of fake names and variations of

the same address!

6. Submit the person's e-mail address to as many porn sites as you can (provided he hasn't already!). He'll never be able to clean out his mailbox.

7. Reset their Internet browser's home page to *www.hamsterdance2.com.*



8. Let them know how evil they are by sending them a deed to Hell, available at *www.hellforsale.com.*

9. Tell them they suck via the "You Suck!!" webpage, at *www.geocities.com/jobless_kay/* – "a place you can come to vent your anger, pain, frustrations, etc. In other words, you can come here to bitch at someone who has wronged you in some way."

10. Dig up some dirt on the scum with *www.discreetdata.com.* Use it to their disadvantage.

11. Seeking something more malicious? Enlist the pros at Pumpkin Head Associates, *www.carte.net/revenge.* They will ... well, I'm not sure what they do.

12. Find some random stupid picture on the web (say, a kitty cat) and download it. Make several hundred copies of that photo. Hide them within a folder within a folder within a folder, *ad nauseum.* Then e-mail it. The recipient will

ATony2005: Well, how is there a problem?
RLott: Your mind would not comprehend, young Anthony.
ATony2005: Does young come in front of my name? No it is Anthony. Who is the stupid one now!
RLott: You, actually. "Young" is an adjective, modifying "Anthony." And you should have put a question mark at the end of that last sentence.

Sepster15: Hey, wanna chat? a/s/l?
RLott: a/s/l?
Sepster15: age/sex/location
RLott: What's it to you?
Sepster15: I was askin to see if you wanna chat.
RLott: But you have no clue who I am. What's the fun in that?
Sepster15: The whole point of it is to get to know you.
RLott: Okay. I'm a 44-year-old FBI agent in D.C. How you doin'?
Sepster15: Fine
Sepster15: How about you?
RLott: Dandy.
Sepster15: ok
RLott: Yep.

Jess1902pigs: hey bec.
Jess1902pigs: r u really on and not answering me?
RLott: tffdfdf
Jess1902pigs: what?
RLott: ddfdffddfg
Jess1902pigs: what is that>
Jess1902pigs: bec, r u being retarded or somethin'?
RLott: ghggfgfg!
Jess1902pigs: ok do none of your keys work? if so, hit gghh
RLott: rwtyy
Jess1902pigs: ok u r scaring me, what is rwtyy?
RLott: o888o86688686
Jess1902pigs: ok, i'm a little scared, so i'm going to bed!
RLott: Baby

Deb122855: is this Ron?Hello
RLott: Wassup?
Deb122855: wondering if your my neighbor???
Deb122855: if so your wife would know ...
Deb122855: sorry to have bothered you.... was just looking for my neighbor and thought i had found them. bye
RLott: Do you want to be my neighbor?
Deb122855: laughing
RLott: What are you wearing,

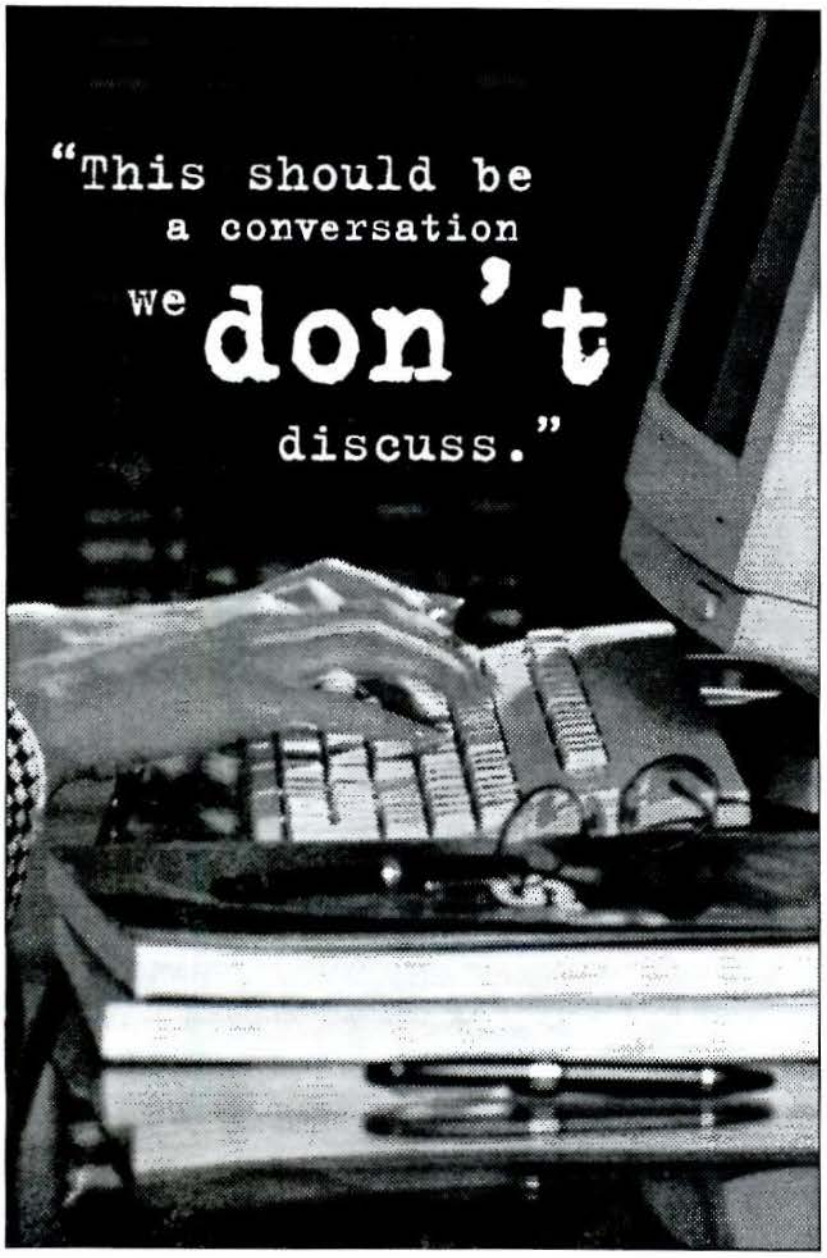
honey?
Deb122855: sorry, i dont answer those kind of questions.
RLott: Okay — what are you NOT wearing?
Deb122855: those either
RLott: C'mon, work with me here.
Deb122855: tell me...
Deb122855: what is your wifes name?
Deb122855: oops, only one wife.....
RLott: Let's not worry about her right now. It's you and me.
Deb122855: is allowed
Deb122855: laughing
RLott: Rising
Deb122855: now now, i want to know if you are who i think you are... and so i want answers to some questions
RLott: Fire away.
Deb122855: do you know where i work?
RLott: Yes.
Deb122855: well tell me
RLott: No.
Deb122855: only the profession
RLott: The streets. You work the streets, sugapants.
Deb122855: funny
Deb122855: tell me when did you get your computer
RLott: Not today!
Deb122855: ok
Deb122855: tell me... do you think you know me?
RLott: Oh yeah!
Deb122855: well tell me something
RLott: You gotsa purty mouth.
Deb122855: what color vehicle do i have
RLott: Fuschia.
Deb122855: no
Deb122855: you are not my neighbor
RLott: Neighbors schneighbors.
Let's get it on!
Deb122855: but it has been fun chatting with you
RLott: Don't stop!
Deb122855: say i dont want to cut this short, but have to .... take care
RLott: Great— now I gotta take a cold shower.
Deb122855: you'll get over it
Deb122855: bye bye

ScubaHood99: hi dad
RLott: Go away - I'm busy.

SLGunLover: Things at the gunshop are slow.
RLott: Why in the hell do you work in a gun shop?
SLGunLover: Hello! Are u mad at me??
RLott: YES!
SLGunLover: ok, sorry! Why are u mad?
RLott: YOU CRAZY!
SLGunLover: okay, I am sorry u feel that way. I guess i will not talk to you then. If you think I am crazy..
RLott: AAAAIIIIEEEE!
SLGunLover: Well don't know why you are being that way, mean ...but it is your decision..
RLott: HERETIC!
SLGunLover: i will not bother you if you do not like me..
RLott: YOU CRAZY TALK!
SLGunLover: not sure what you mean by that?
RLott: EAT POOPOO!
SLGunLover: bye!

Nergylaugh: Hi I'm on again
RLott: Oh, great, where were

we?
Nergylaugh: I don't know where we were. I was lost in cyberspace
Nergylaugh: I'm using aol's 800 number. It's cool, it always works, but it's $6 per hour
RLott: $6?!? That'll buy a pack of Trojans!
Nergylaugh: And I would NEED them. If I were ever "exposed"
Nergylaugh: Where's Jim?
RLott: Jim konked out and went to sleep.
Nergylaugh: his phone is busy
Nergylaugh: must be the old girlfriend
RLott: He probably fell asleep during phone sex! Tee hee!
Nergylaugh: Tee hee! Not with such a chirpy cheerful person
RLott: What's wrong?
Nergylaugh: shit
Nergylaugh: One of thoe life hates me kind of days
Nergylaugh: And I SOOOO rarely have those
Nergylaugh: I am Miss Optimistic
Nergylaugh: Life Is GOOOD-DDD
Nergylaugh: I HATE these days
RLott: One line would have sufficed — I get the message!
Nergylaugh: My period?
RLott: Oh, the ol' menses — that explains it. Heavy or light?
Nergylaugh: Heavy. Only is a problem for about 48 hours
RLott: Yipes! When I get like



ME
Nergylaugh: with YOU?
RLott: I'll never tell!
Nergylaugh: I'm sure you won't!
Nergylaugh: I am in a FOUL mood tonight. And I'm normally that, I practically need a roll of Bounty!
Nergylaugh: They make those for women
Nergylaugh: They just don't look exactly like a roll of bounty
Nergylaugh: but they work the same way
Nergylaugh: this is gross
RLott: Do they have a lumberjack on them, too? Grrr...
Nergylaugh: NO
Nergylaugh: What's the temp there?
RLott: Judging from my nipples, about 40.
Nergylaugh: THAT's a scary description
Nergylaugh: So. I know exactly where we were when I got booted off. Do you?
RLott: Weren't we talking about baking?
Nergylaugh: WAH
Nergylaugh: No
Nergylaugh: We were talking about Jim's last girlfriend
Nergylaugh: Needless to say I will shamelessly pump you for information
RLott: Did I say baking? I must have meant bitching.
Nergylaugh: I'm trying SOOOOO Hard not to bitch. I really am.
Nergylaugh: And Jim 's phone is still busy
RLott: Maybe Jim's calling the suicide hotline again.
Nergylaugh: Nope. It's the old girlfriend. Feel it in my bones.
RLott: Speaking of bones, I read that milk is good for keeping them strong.
Nergylaugh: Nope.
Nergylaugh: Calcium is
Nergylaugh: Yes the two are connected
Nergylaugh: However, calcium comes from many sources
RLott: I was never good at science.
Nergylaugh: Soy seems to be the better choice
RLott: Isn't soy what the orientals always drink?
Nergylaugh: Yes it is
RLott: Then I don't like it.
Nergylaugh: They have a much lower incidence of breast and prostate cancer
Nergylaugh: And the politically correct term is Asians NOT orientals
RLott: You know what I meant.
Nergylaugh: Yes I did!!!!
RLott: At least I didn't say Fu Manchus.
Nergylaugh: I would kick your

not only have to sit through a long download time, he'll have to click through folder after folder for – what? Several hundred photos of some stupid picture on the web (say, a kitty cat).

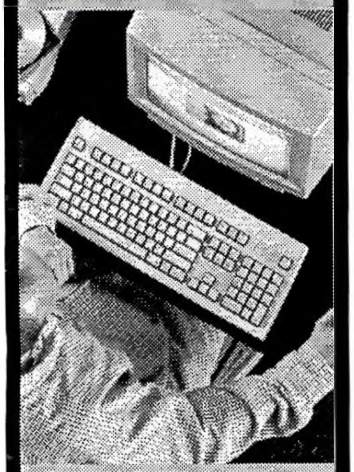
13. Sign on to *www.list-bot.com* and *www.egroups.com* and subscribe them to as many e-mail newsletters as you have the patience. Let the flood begin!

14. Use their e-mail address to post in the X-rated newsgroups. Before they know it, they'll be neck-deep in Spam.

15. Wreak havoc on their computer via some free and ultimately harmless downloads from *www.free-ware.com/desktop/fun-stuff.html*. Choose from "DownHoax" (which simulates the unwanted download of a virus), "The Flatulator" (timed to open their CD-ROM drive and fart), "Fatal Error" (which gives false error messages) or go for broke with the all-

in-one, 25-prank "Revenge Pack."

16. Using their e-mail address, post negative messages in newsgroups *about* that particular newsgroup subject. For example, in *alt.fan.britney-spears*, simply say, "BRITNEY SPEARS IS AN UGLY, UNTALENTED WENCH!" Let the rabid fans do the rest.



17. When they're not looking, bid in their name on the highest-priced eBay item you can find. Like a car. Or two! Remember, money is no object when it's not *your* money.

18. Also while they're not looking, use eBay to sell items they don't actually own – like "Mint Condition *Action Comics* #1!"

19. Or why not use eBay to sell items that they *do* own?

20. Tell him how you really feel (but anonymously, of course) by ordering him a lifetime membership in the Insensitive Guys of America club, at *www.insensitiveguys.com*.

If any of the above toes the lines of legality, HITCH is of course no way responsible or liable for your silly actions.

ass
RLott: I'd like to see you try!
Nergylaugh: I'm possibly qualified to do so!!
Nergylaugh: I have muscles
RLott: Yes, but you're on your period so I could annihilate you.
Nergylaugh: And tongiht I REALLY hate men, so it would probably work
Nergylaugh: Umm, we're meaner then
Nergylaugh: on our periods
RLott: But weaker physically.
Nergylaugh: True
RLott: Too bloated to deliver a good blow.
Nergylaugh: Possibly
Nergylaugh: Ok. Tell me about JIm's old girlfriend
RLott: What do you want to know?
Nergylaugh: He told me to ask YOU if you liked her
RLott: No. Not anymore.
Nergylaugh: Did you like her BEFORE they broke up?
RLott: Up to a point, yes.
Nergylaugh: Just give it hell. Be wordy. Tell me.
Nergylaugh: And I'm sorry to be so nosy, but I have an "online crush" on your friend
RLott: I thought she was good for him and a lot of fun. One night, we all went out to dinner and had a great time. Too great.
Nergylaugh: What happened
RLott: We all got hammered, and one thing lead to another, and well, you know...
Nergylaugh: All three of you?
RLott: That's why I can't face her again.
Nergylaugh: When did thi shappen?
RLott: Two months ago. I try to forget.
Nergylaugh: wow
Nergylaugh: I've had that happen before too
RLott: Fun while it lasted, but you know the rest.
Nergylaugh: You did it more than once?
RLott: Twice that night, but only that night.
Nergylaugh: This should be a conversation we don't discuss.
Nergylaugh: With anyone else.
RLott: Duh!
Nergylaugh: But I appreciate DUH yourself! that you're talking to me
Nergylaugh: And I'l I be honest with you
Nergylaugh: Please don't repeat this
Nergylaugh: You are MUCH more chatty than you were earlier. What happened
RLott: Had an orgasm. Loosened up.
Nergylaugh: Thank you for that image in my brain. I have changed my mind. I really do NOT need eggs and cheese for dinner. Ugh
RLott: Want me to send you a JPEG?
Nergylaugh: Yes
Nergylaugh: Have you seen Mansfield Park? The movie? There is a direct bearing on our conversation and Mansfield Park
RLott: No I haven't. But I did watch Cosby last night.
Nergylaugh: There was the "cad" in the movie
Nergylaugh: Who swore he'd changed his ways for this woman and would wait for her to decide she loved him
Nergylaugh: And she told him she couldn't trust him.
Nergylaugh: Then she caught him in bed with another woman who, btw, was MARRIED
Nergylaugh: Which is fine if someone wants to do that
Nergylaugh: But the problem was that I , sitting in the audience, toally believed that the cad had changed and loved her and would wait etc
RLott: I felt the same way during A Bug's Life. But it never came to be.
Nergylaugh: I didn't see tha movie
RLott: It's like what you described, only with insects.

H

Subj: Terms of Service
Date: Thursday, May 25, 2000 9:40:17 PM
From: CATRep429
To: RLott

Dear Member,

I need to let you know that America Online received the following report regarding a Terms of Service violation via instant message to another member. Here is the information I have placed on the account regarding this incident:

On May 25 2000 8:12PM EST the RLott screen name sent an instant message to another Member of America Online. The following is an excerpt from the instant message: " RLott: Fuckin' A! "

Our Terms of Service agreement, which was presented during the sign up process, allows America Online to be informative, entertaining and, above all, fun for all of our Members. You can review that agreement by using keyword TOS. This area also has information and tools you can use to help protect your account. Also, you may want to take a look at our PARENTAL CONTROLS. This will allow you, among other things, to limit and/or block specific screen names from various online activities.

Thanks for taking the time to read this letter. Please note, this screen name cannot accept replies. Therefore, if you have any comments or questions please send mail to TOSGeneral.

Regards,
Arlene Joy
Community Action Team
America Online, Inc.

EMPEROR NORTON RECORDS

Señor Coconut
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Your favorite Kraftwerk songs remade by Santiago's fun loving Latin playboy, Señor Coconut! Put away your black t-shirt, put on a guayabera and get ready to rumba!

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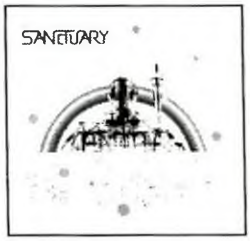
Logan's Sanctuary

The mind altering analog synth soundtrack sequel to the 70's sci-fi cult film, brought to you by Roger Joseph Manning Jr. (Moog Cookbook, Jellyfish) and Brian Reitzell (Air, Redd Kross)



Cinemaphonic:
Electro Soul
Various Artists

Funky library music from the seventies. A collection of noirish film jazz, electronic grooves, and schizo disco.

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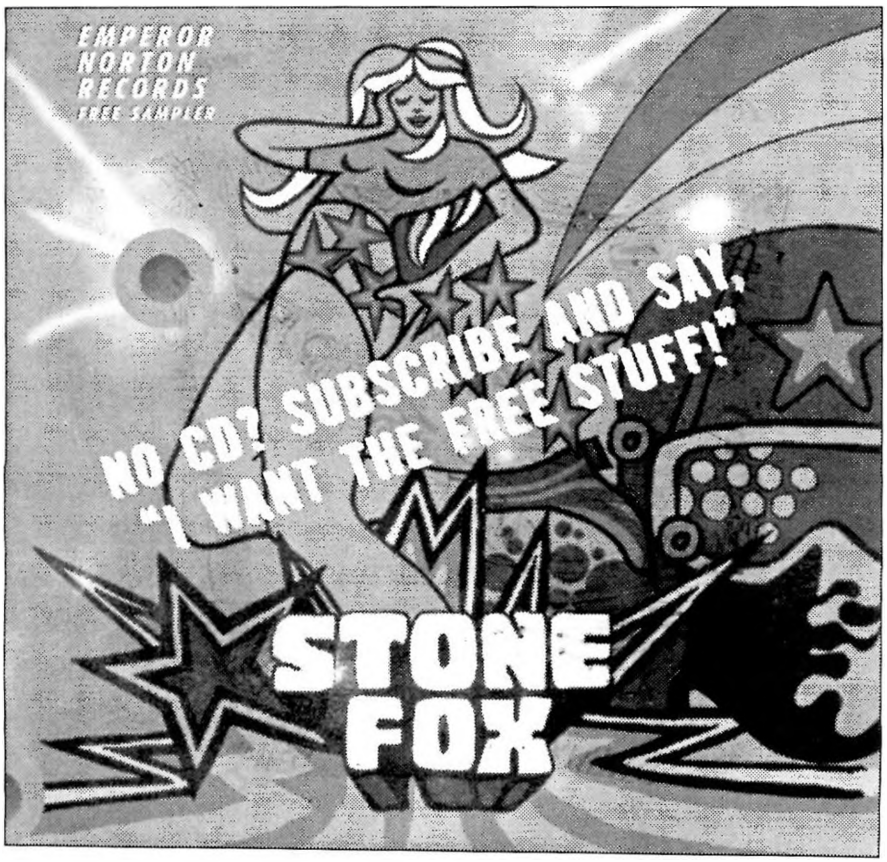

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EMPEROR NORTON RECORDS

& HITCH

a free 12-track CD sampler featuring new music by:

- air
- fantastic plastic machine
- arling & cameron
- DJ me DJ you
- roger manning jr. & brian reitzel
- zoobombs
- bruce haack

and more!

It's music to read HITCH by!

disc dish

edited by Rod Lott

cd of the moment

Broadcast
The Noise Made by People
(Tommy Boy / Warp)

Hard to believe this is a debut album. That is not to say Broadcast has appeared from out of nowhere, however – they've put out singles and EPs for a number of years, but previous efforts to commit to a full-length LP proved fruitless because they wanted to get their sound just right. And what a sound it is. Broadcast probably earns comparisons to Stereolab more than anyone else, but whereas the 'Lab seems to specialize in bubbly electropop, Broadcast has sought a patent on the dark and foreboding side of things. With cold, unusual instrumentation as their compass, they explore musical territories only partly charted by pioneers John Barry and Ennio Morricone, discovering songs with a vaguely '60s feel that want to be anywhere else but there. Trish Keenan's vocals and hushed and haunting, much like the music itself. It never explodes beyond a certain volume, but entrances throughout. "Come On Let's Go" sounds the sunniest, but check out the overcast – the other songs are just as melodically rich, no matter the pace. And thus far, I've heard nothing better all year.

LIKE IT? TRY...

- Broadcast: *Work and Non-Work* (Drag City)
- Stereolab: *Dots and Loops* (Elektra)
- *Wearereasonablepeople* (Warp)
- *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery* (Hollywood)

STILL SPINNING

- Sumack: *Now Hear This* (V2)
- Luna: *The Days of Our Nights* (Jericho)
- Death in Vegas: *The Contino Sessions* (Time Bomb/Concrete)
- Kid Loco: *DJ-Kicks* (Studio K7)
- Plone: *For Beginner Piano* (Matador)

rock

UnAmerican
UnAmerican
(Universal)

UnAmerican's USP is that it's a British band that sounds frighteningly American. This is so true that halfway into the second song, I had completely forgotten that they *weren't* American, because this is very much early-summer-road-trip-across-the-Midwest-with-the-top-down kind of stuff. They play straight-up rock and roll with a tinge of country, and make no apologies for it. Nor should they. Not that there aren't a few missteps along the way, but the album is a rough-and-tumble affair with cinematic range and ambition. The more you listen, the more you love.

XTC
Wasp Star (Apple Venus, Vol. 2)
(TVT)

I'm pleased to report that even one member shy of its usual lineup, XTC is still just XTC. Why a country that still worships its Beatles won't embrace these guys and make them superstars continues to perplex me after all these years. For several months in high school, I would spend a few minutes in my beat-up VW listening to *Oranges & Lemons* before stepping inside for first period. It should be considered my highest praise to say I would have done the same with this one. "Playground" sounds like the strongest burst of pure pop the band has given birth to in years. Andy Partridge relinquishes vocal duties to Colin Moulding for three songs, and the trade is welcome, particularly on the sparse ballad "Boarded Up." While so many bands reinvent themselves with every album, it's nice to know that at least someone has the guts to keep delivering what they do best.

Quickspace
The Death of Quickspace
(Matador)

Quickspace's sound is near-impossible to nail down. For that reason alone, they beg comparisons to The Beta Band, whose music also defies description. With the lively *Death*, you get swirling, slacker-type jazz-rock that beguiles as much as it charms. It opens with "The Lobbalong Song," and "lobbalong" seems like an apt descriptor, even if it's a nonsense word. You have to love a band with the balls to give their intoxicating jams head-scratching titles like "Munchers No Munchers" or cruel jokes like "They Shoot Horse Don't They." You may not know what you're hearing, but you know you like it enough to submit and surrender. Repeat along with me, in zombie-like tone: *"Must ... love ... Quickspace."*

Primal Scream
XTRMNTR
(Astralwerks)

It's loud, messy, aggressive and abrasive – and another great album from the ever-evolving, never-dull Primal Scream. The level of talent here is top-notch, with a wealth of A-list guests, including David Holmes, The Chemical Brothers and members of My Bloody Valentine, Death in Vegas and New Order. Like the recent Death in Vegas and JSBX records, the guest concept works wonderfully *because they're never exploited* – they just fit right into the groove without calling attention to themselves. "MRV Arkestra" is an intricate, experimental (and successful) tapestry of sounds, masterminded by Kevin Shields, while "Shoot Speed/Kill Light" is an outright adrenaline rush. Yet my favorite is the epic, Holmes-produced "Blood Money," along with its companion, the

Primal Scream

richly understated "Keep Your Dreams." However, I would strongly advise Bobby Gillespie against recreating his "fuck rap" (there's really no other term for it) from "Pills" ever again – *XTRMNTR*'s one and only liability.

Dreamworld: Essential Late Night Listening
(Priority)
With the berth of chillout compilations churned out in the UK, it was only a matter of time before the States followed suit. How ingenious, though, that they chose not to go with an all-electronica lineup, instead including rock acts who simply know how to play it cool. So alongside your Moby, Hooverphonic and Massive Attack, you'll also find the gothic stylings of Dead Can Dance, Luna's brilliant "Sweet Child o' Mine" cover, a wonderfully lethargic Spiritualized number and a vintage dose of Cocteau Twins. Smartly programmed, it's on my heavy rotation list, no matter the time of day.

12 Rods
Separation Anxieties
(V2)
12 Rods' smart-pop *Split Personalities* was one of my favorite finds from two summers ago. Overall, this follow-up makes for a better and more cohesive album – it just explodes from the start and takes flight. Ryan Olcott still sings his throat dry, the band still plays their collective heart out and their wicked sense of humor remains intact (*"She lost her libido then dumped me for a punk / Who's in a band sounds like Korn / Pretentiously aggressive, not too impressive,"* begins "What Has Happened?"). The hooks are barbed and everywhere you turn, and the songs seem to be polished with a reverent '80s feel-good, top-down summer sheen. Listen to the beginning of "Marionette" and tell me it doesn't sound like The Buggles reincarnated. (That's not meant as a criticism.) "Kaboom" is a take-no-prisoners pop treasure, pure and simple. So is the rest of it. I love it.

Magnified
Stand in Traffic
(TVT)
Now this one I like – a perfectly acceptable pop record with an edge harder than most. It also has a layer of guitar-based funk that is allowed to bubble up every now and then. The titular "Stand in Traffic" opens it up and sets the pace (for the record, *quick*), which is brought down a notch for the relative balladry of the catchy "Monday." The best moment comes with "Stuck with Me," which effectively utilizes a toy piano in creating a sweeping break. I also have to hand it to them for having the balls to cover Joe Jackson's "Is She Really Going Out with Him," which could've easily fallen flat, but comes off well and like a lot of fun.

Mary Timony
Mountains
(Matador)
A lo-fi debut from Helium's Mary Timony, *Mountains* is a sparse, airy affair with understated and often baroque arrangements juiced up by wry lyrics. It's hard not to pay attention to a girl who opens a song by proclaiming, *"I fire myself 10 times a day / I throw myself in a watery grave."* As depressing as that sounds, Timony's self-loathing isn't a bummer, since her three-minute therapy sessions often are boosted by interesting instrumentation, whether discordant strings or vibes provided by John McEntire. File under Liz Phair on Motrin.

Cupcakes
Cupcakes
(DreamWorks)
Sissy name, cool band. If it were my money on the line, I'd put it all on "Vidiots" as the song that will give them their breakthrough. It's a catchy little number flavored with static blips and techno beeps over a chorus with a killer hook. Several others come close, like the laid-back "High Speed Cakes in the Hole" or "Deep Space Bossa," which plays exactly like it sounds. In short, they sound a little like Weezer without the Pixies influence or a Harvard degree.

A Perfect Circle
Mer de Noms
(Virgin)
Tool frontman Kevin Maynard takes a sabbatical for an excursion into hard progressive rock that's actually not half bad. I expected noise – and granted, you do get some of that – but the album is well produced and contains some nice touches, particularly the guitar work and in the quieter moments. Personally, I think this would make a terrific instrumental record (the vocal-less, string-laden "Renholdër" is proof), but that's just my aversion to this style of vocals.

Bender
Jehovah's Hitlist
(TVT)
Bender's debut won't make a fan of Sharon Stone. Witness these opening lyrics from the song "Sharon Stone": *"Check bitch no fuck this I jack you with a mind probe / Straight out of the PSI lab and I'm crapping in your pie hole."* But methinks Ms. Stone is not the target market here. This rides the current wave of aggressive, rap-metal rock that has inexplicably made multi-platinum stars of Korn and Limp Bizkit. I have no reason to doubt that this won't immediately connect with that same crowd.

Luaka Bop – 10th Anniversary: Zero Accidents on the Job
(Luaka Bop)
David Byrne's world music label celebrates its first decade with a specially priced, two-disc set. The first disc contains "Steamy Hits" from the more contemporary bands, while the second revisits "Slow Jams" from established, influential artists. Among this group are Tom Zé and Os Mutantes, but I'm more excited by the work of the new class, whose members have adopted the sounds of their peers with an eye toward tomorrow. I speak of Byrne himself, Los Amigos Invisibles, Cornershop/Clinton and Geggy Tah, whose minor radio hit "Whoever You Are" was clearly ahead of its time.

Nashville Pussy
High as Hell
(TVT)
The band? Nashville Pussy. The album? *High as Hell*. The songs? "Struttin' Cock," "Go to Hell," "Piece of Ass," "Blowjob from a Rattlesnake," "She's Got the Drugs." The verdict? If you're used to purchasing GPCs with your food stamps, then this is your cup of shit. Words cannot express my hatred, however, for this redneck-metal waste of resources.

The Suburbillies
Sub-Bourbon
(mp3.com)
Imagine an alternative-country band fronted by someone with a voice strongly reminiscent of Michael Stipe, and you've got the Suburbillies, based in Oklahoma City. The songwriting is competent, but the

music even more so. The guys in the band sound like they're having a good time, and you can't help but have it rub off on your ears. "Cry to God" and "Turn Me Around," emerging as the most melodic, are the highlights. Despite the title, it really doesn't sound liquor-fueled until you get to the *"Yee-haw!"* cry on the closer, "Your Ghost."

Ignite
A Place Called Home
(TVT)

Presumably riding the current hard-metal resurgence, Ignite bursts onto the scene with *A Place Called Home*, which stands out among the pack for being the most socially conscious than the others. And at the risk of sounding like my dad, if they didn't yell so much, I might be able to listen to it. The guitars are fast and furious, leaving little room for pause, which is just how the hard-metal fans like it. Among the targets Ignite takes on: domestic violence, schoolyard shootings and (via an ad in the CD tray) whaling. Choose your cause – there's probably a song here supporting it.

Arab Strap
Elephant Shoe
(Jetset)

With Arab Strap, it's always the same: sexually obsessed moping and self-loathing. They sound as dingy and dank as ever, but for some reason, this connected with me a lot more than the previous record. It must lie in the production, because it's certainly not in the sunny optimism! With Arab Strap, it's also hard to pick a favorite track since they're all variations of the same pity party, so I won't even try. I will say that I enjoyed the slight jazz-orchestral swoon of "Tanned."

The Best of Reading's Oldies/The Al-Stan Masters
(Al-Stan)

Al-Stan was a label in Reading, Penn. in the '50s and '60s, and this compilation pays tribute to its legacy by collecting 27 of its singles. Most of them are straight-ahead white-bread rock and doo-wop numbers, but the couple of cuts by The Rockin' Bellmarx utilize more of a hip surf sound. The neatest thing is the addition of five bonus novelty tracks, including a spoken-word Dracula number, "The Vampire Speaks" and "A Message from Santa." I'm assuming here that the closer you live to Reading, the more of a kick you'll get out of this.

13 Stars
The Nova Project
(Hale-Bopp Space)

With a name like 13 Stars and a title like that, I'd expect a sound that's a bit, well, spacey. Instead, this Norman, Okla. four-piece plays rather uninspired and unstellar rock, produced by Trent Bell of Chainsaw Kittens. It's not so much the music that's the problem as it is the lead singer. I can't even describe how unappealingly mangled his vocals are. And what's the point of covering The Cars' "My Best Friend's Girl" if you're not going to put your own spin on it?

soundtrax

Me, Myself & Irene
Music from the Motion Picture
(Elektra)

Fitting that a split-personality comedy has a soundtrack album with a duality of its own. Half of it is numbers from low-profile singer-songwriters like Pete Yorn and Ellis Paul, who are fine, fine talents. The other half is a tribute to Steely Dan, with covers from high-profile acts, like Smash Mouth (doing "Do It Again") and Brian Setzer Orchestra (doing "Bodhisattva"). These aren't my favorite acts, but I have to admit they do the songs justice. Each artist covers the songs in their own unique style, but neither mess it up nor disrespect it. Wilco seems like it was born to do "Any Major Dude Will Tell You," and Marvelous 3 give "Reelin' in the Years" a bit of a rough-hewn treatment that serves it well. Others making the Fagan/Becker team proud include Ben Folds Five, Ivy and The Push Stars.

Hamlet
Music from the Miramax Motion Picture
(Rykodisc)

High on atmosphere and ambience, the *Hamlet* soundtrack is a nice surprise. Most of the names are unknown, but Primal Scream and Morcheeba claim spots with previously released tracks. Capturing the same vibe are new LA outfit Supreme Beings of Leisure, with "Sublime," which is. Top honors go to a hat trick of moody, instrumental drone rock – Acceleradeck's "Greentone," Fourtet's "Calamine" and O'Neill's "Moon Tide." I'd never heard of any of these artists, but the tracks are so strong, I sought out albums by all.

The Beach
Motion Picture Soundtrack
(London)

You may not be able to count on director Danny Boyle 100% for a great movie, but he gives great soundtrack time after time, and on that latter note, *The Beach* ranks right up there with *Trainspotting*. This time around, grade-A electronica is the genre of choice, with stellar efforts from Moby, UNKLE and the uncharacteristically subdued Underworld and Asian Dub Foundation. I rightly expected the All Saints and Sugar Ray to suck, but they don't, probably because they were produced by William Orbit and penned by Brian Eno, respectively. What could have been a problematic merger is "Beached," the collaboration of Orbital with composer Angelo Badalamenti, topped with Leonardo DiCaprio dialogue snippets, but it stands as one of the disc's high points – a distinction certainly shared by the triumphant return of New Order. Welcome back, fellas. You couldn't have picked a better place to start.

The Next Best Thing
Music from the Motion Picture
(Maverick)

The movie may suck, but the soundtrack has tons more life. Madonna herself contributes two tracks, the oft-reviled but curious "American Pie" cover and a far superior ballad, "Time Stood Still," both produced by *Ray of Light* shepherd William Orbit. With the exception of that skank Christina Aguilera, there's really nothing here to skip. It works quite well as a groove record, with Beth Orton, Olive, Groove Armada and – good God, is he *everywhere?* – Moby.

Gone in 60 Seconds
Music from the Motion Picture
(Island)

They had a good thing going here, boasting exclusive new tracks from Moby, Groove Armada, The Cult and Gomez – and then they had to spoil the broth with three gangsta rap numbers. But if you can program them out, there's lots left to like, including A3, The Chemical Brothers, the Left Banke-sampling Caviar and the current soundtrack-compilation-band-of-choice, Apollo Four Forty.

Air
Original Motion Picture Score for The Virgin Suicides
(Astralwerks)

If you expect another *Moon Safari*, you'll be soundly disappointed. But if you recall that Air's pre-*Safari* work was decidedly un-*Safari* and also was great, then you're apt to eat up their touching and twisted score for the dark Sofia Coppola film. It is a score in every sense of the word, with a main theme (the single, "Playground Love") – refrains and pieces of which weave themselves into later compositions – that ultimately reprises itself. Air hasn't totally aban-

Air

doned its light electronic sound, but they've added a heap of progressive rock influences to what remains of it here.

***High Fidelity* Original Soundtrack (Hollywood)**

Top Five Reasons the *High Fidelity* soundtrack is worth buying:
5. Anything with Stereolab on it is money well-spent.
4. "Most of the Time," one of the best Bob Dylan songs in the last two decades.
3. A new, non-folk John Wesley Harding song, "I'm Wrong about Everything."
2. The melodic epiphany of The Beta Band's "Dry the Rain."
1. Love's bouncy ballad, "Always See Your Face."

***Switched On: The Cool Sound of TV Advertising* (Telstar TV)**

You may cry "Sellout!," but I applaud Madison Avenue for embracing music that Top 40 radio dares not touch, even if it is to sell beer and blue jeans. This two-CD British import collects and celebrates those modern sounds which have been licensed to shill. With *Switched On*, you get a little bit of elder statesmen (Lalo Schifrin), some exalted acts of alterna-yesteryear (Pixies) and a whole lotta in-the-now, on-the-pulse acts such as Moby, Leftfield, Propellerheads, New Order, David Holmes and the ever-ubiquitous (but by no means unwelcome) Fatboy Slim. Tune in, turn on.

***Better Living Through Circuitry* The Soundtrack (Moonshine)**

Covering as many different genres of electronic music as the film, the *Better Living* soundtrack can appeal to a wide array of digital-minded tastes. Most of the dozen tracks are winners, with only a couple songs falling victim to the sub-genre I like to call "thumping rave shit." But on the good side, there are contributions from electro-jazz artists Roni Size and DJ Spooky, remixes of Future Sound of London and The Crystal Method and a new tune from Meat Beat Manifesto. The CD also includes Acid Planet software so you can mix your own music – unless you're using a Mac! *Boo!*

***Swingers Too!* More Music from and Inspired by the Hit Motion Picture Swingers (Hollywood)**

Releasing a second soundtrack album for a successful flick is near-common practice these days – witness *Boogie Nights*, *Trainspotting*, *Grosse Point Blank* or *The Spy Who Shagged Me*. But those films' discs were released in close proximity to one another, and for some reason, *Swingers* had to wait *three years*. Sorry to say, but the swing craze the film helped jumpstart is all but dead. Luckily, it boasts some acts whose appeal is timeless, from Dean Martin to Ann-Margret. Only two cuts here appeared in the film – Heart's out-of-place "Magic Man" and Marty & Elayne's nursing-home-friendly take on "Stayin' Alive." The rest is filler, but largely satisfying, with ace performances from Mel Torme, Xavier Cugat, Dinah Washington and Count Basie.

***Screen Wars* (Dressed to Kill)**

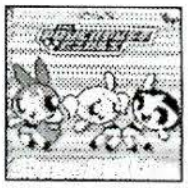
"The tunes are out there," proclaims the cover of this no-budget collection of cover songs from sci-fi-themed motion pictures. All are performed by anonymous studio musicians who really don't have a knack for this sort of thing. The disco rendition of the *Star Wars* theme is kinda cool, as is the disco suite from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. But when you start doing Sheryl Crow's "Everyday Is a Winding Road" just because it was featured in *Phenomenon*, well, that's stretching it. And the song "Flash" from *Flash* (as the liner notes indicate) is actually Queen's theme to *Flash Gordon* ... except not by Queen. Other wretched numbers come from *Space Jam*, *Batman Forever*, *Super Mario Brothers* and *The Fifth Element*.

***Theme from Get Carter* (Castle)**

A project bound to happen, Roy Budd's venerable theme – the epitome of '60s cool – has been remixed by four electronica artists for this EP. All sound similar to one another, but all are cool nonetheless. It begins with a "breakneck" breakbeat radio edit and ends with standout renditions by Lionrock and The Deadly Avenger. None, however, beat Budd's original.

***2Ge+her* Music from the MTV Original TV Movie (TVT)**

The MTV flick *2Ge+her* spoofed the boy-band craze currently at atrociously high levels with 'N Sync and Backstreet Boys. Perhaps they spoof it *too* well, as the super-slick, over-produced music sounds like it could be found on any of those guys' records. Of course, they wouldn't be caught dead crooning a ballad entitled "Rub One Out." I think the humor of offerings like that or "U + Me = Us (Calculus)" is lost on the pre-pubescent girls who are buying this disc in droves, but hey, I'm all for subversion.



***The Powerpuff Girls* Heroes & Villains: Music Inspired by The Powerpuff Girls (Rhino)**

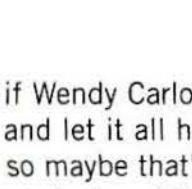
Heavy on the J-pop, *Heroes & Villains* assembles an impressive lineup of alternative artists to perform songs based upon characters from Cartoon Network's hippest show. The album is produced by Devo's Mark Mothersbaugh and Robert Casale, so naturally, Devo reassembles for the properly Devo-esque "Go Monkey Go," while Bis is represented with two cuts, including the end theme. Ex-Pixie Frank Black screams his way through "Pray for the Girls," while Shonen Knife pen an ode to Buttercup. Most impressive are Cornelius' relentlessly frentic instrumental "The Fight" and The Apples in Stereo's power-poppy "Signal in the Sky (Let's Go)." Optiganally Yours and Komeda help round out this most eclectic parade, as do the Powerpuff Girls themselves, via interstitial bits between the tracks. The show is cool, but this is decidedly cooler.

swank

***Harpsichord 2000* (S.H.A.D.O.)**

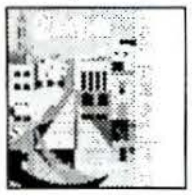
My favorite foreign country? Currently, it's Italy, for putting out this excellent and often brilliant compilation, with modern bands paying tribute to that most baroque of instruments, the harpsichord. It's as

if Wendy Carlos dropped acid and let it all hang out. (Okay, so maybe that's not the best of analogies...) The vintage synth takes center-stage among the electro-noodlings of artists like Momus and Stereo Total, with smatterings of video-game SFX, air-traffic dialogue and phone chatter scattered about. Valvola and Remington Super 60 go sweetly cinematic over several appearances on the 23 tracks, both together and seperately. Die Moulinettes contribute the very Stereolab-esque "Flipper Queen," while Electroscope and DJ Spectra collaborate on "Out of the Edge of Time," with sharp crackles and static bursts that warm the soul like an old slab of vinyl. Astro Black Stereo brings a bit of '70s-style Afro-funk into the mix, while The Barry Gemso Experience ventures south of the border for the album's capper, "Dial 'S' for Siren." *Harpsichord 2000* marks another welcome bridge between the easy sounds of yesteryear and tomorrow's progressive electronic pop. Extremely of-the-moment, they just don't come any hipper than this.



***Cinemaphonic: Electro Soul* (Emperor Norton)**

There are a million and one production music compilations on shelves, a good majority of which are awfully generic. *Cinemaphonic* is one of those glorious exceptions, and likely the funkiest. Laying down 18 soul-jazz grooves from the '60s and '70s, it sounds invigoratingly fresh today. Favorites include the wah-wah of Richard C. Sanders' "Electro Soul," the blaxploitation-esque "Hot Buns" by Mario Nascimbene and the smooth-as-silk "Hocus Pokus" by Walter Murphy, famous for his disco staple "A Fifth of Beethoven" (and whose cut "Dancin'" can be found on this month's subscribers' CD). Most production music isn't even worth the shelf space it sits on or the dust it collects, but *Cinemaphonic* is so flat-out funky it's one to repeat often.



***Songs for the Jet Set 2000* (Jetset)**

The third time really *is* the charm, as entry #3 in the utterly charming *Jet Set* series succeeds by going for a '70s vibe, rather than the decidedly '60s feel of *Vol. 2*. Sharp ears will pick out bits of influences of The Association and The Free Design bubbling up throughout, or your mind may be too far gone into utter pop ecstasy to know the difference. Most of the tracks are phenomenal, particularly Wallpaper's "At the Art Museum," a highly cinematic number that sounds as though it would be home on the *Blow Up* soundtrack. But as great as the uptempo songs are, I find myself going back to a pair of ballads by Tomorrow's World: "On a Saturday" and "I Realised You." This latter one in particular is most touching and affecting, and totally recaptures the magic that made the previous *Jet Set*s so wonderful and memorable.

***The Fez File: Volume Uno* (Schema)**

If you're jetting off for some globe-trotting spy adventure this summer, then: 1) Can I come? and 2) I've found your soundtrack. No matter what the scene, *The Fez File* has it all. The Karminsky Experience's "The Hip Sheik" is your theme song. (Your arch-enemy has his, too, in Thievery Corporation's "Meeting with His Majesty.") For that swinging party you'll attend where you'll romance the ladies, there's Ursula 1000 and Stereo Action Unlimited with "Funky Bikini" and "Hi Fi Trumpet," respectively. And when you take one of the honeys back to your hotel room, Cinematic Orchestra's "Channel 1 Suite" is your score to, er, score. Throw Bobby Hughes Experience, Nicola Conte and Dauerfish into the mix, shake, serve and – *pleeeeease*, can I go?

***Señor Coconut y Su Conjunto El Baile Alemán* (Emperor Norton)**

With a name like Señor Coconut and its utterly bizarre concept, this Kraftwerk-classics-done-Latin-style album was presumed by me to be a one-listen novelty, *a la* Texas Chainsaw Orchestra. But then I listened to it ... three times in a row. Indeed, Señor Coconut recasts the well-known German computer-music cuts as peppy cha-chas and rousing rhumbas, but it works! He pays reverence to the songs – "Autobahn" and "Showroom Dummies" among them – while remaining irreverent himself. In other words, he *has* fun, but doesn't *make* fun. And dare I say his treatment even *enhances* the appeal of Kraftwerk's originals? Well, there – I said it.

***Organ-ized An All-Star Tribute to the Hammond B3 Organ* (High Street)**

A cool idea, this tribute to the Hammond B3, the funkiest of all organs and perhaps even all instruments. It most kicks into high gear when the new kids let loose on it, from Galactic to John Medeski (of Medeski, Martin & Wood fame). And for those of you longing for a lounge classic, look no further than the capper, with Mr. Jack McDuff playing "Misty" for you.

***Logan's Sanctuary* (Emperor Norton)**

Should you have any doubts whether Roger Manning Jr. (Jellyfish) and Brian Reitzell (Redd Kross) could pull off an imaginary soundtrack to a cheesy '70s sci-fi sequel, the very first track of *Logan's Sanctuary* will demolish them. This is goofy cinema-synth made with Moogs and silly space SFX, and it is damned irresistible. Most of it is instrumental, but "Search for Tomorrow" enlists the pipes of Manning's former cohort Jason Faulkner. "Pleasure Dome 12" serves as the love (or lust) theme, and it all sounds like Manning's Moog Cookbook act was given free reign. Hmm, whaddaya know? Creative freedom *does* work. Select subscribers can sample *Sanctuary* on this issue's free CD.

James Clarke *Blow Up A-Go-Go!* (V2)

From the hit Gap TV spot comes a quick slice of hip go-go for today's youth ... from 1973! What may have sounded out of place back then is now contemporary as ever. To capitalize on the song's revival, it's been re-released as a single, backed by two similarly swanky instrumentals from Clarke's label-mate Syd Dale.

Stereophonic Space Sound Unlimited *The Spacesound Effect* (Dionysus)

The Swiss duo returns in strong-as-ever form with their third LP, every bit as good as the others. As before, the style of the tracks veers from space to samba, spy to spooky, surf to swank, all to wonderful retro effect, transporting your mind to the hippest club on the other side of the globe. In my book, SSSU is one of the finest (and funnest, to mangle the language) instrumental bands working today. A great time, guaranteed.

wired

William Orbit *Pieces in a Modern Style* (Maverick)

Known for making Madonna cool again, Orbit strikes out on his own with a solo effort that's a real work of beauty and art. Covering one's favorite classical music pieces in an ambient style sounds like

a suicide mission, but Orbit's touch is so delicate that the music bubbles and brims without losing a touch of their original, timeless melodies. Barber's "Adagia for Strings" is the only cut that doesn't seem too have been touched, but others, like Erik Satie's "Ogive Number 1" or John Cage's "In a Landscape" really come alive. A bonus disc boasts two overly techno and ultimately useless remixes of "Adagio," proving that some care does need to be exercised when dealing with sacred material, so you don't end up looking like a joke. Orbit clearly understands this, which is why his album is such a winner.

Thievery Corporation
The Mirror Conspiracy
(ESL Music)

I was not a huge fan of Thievery Corporation's debut, *Sounds from the Thievery Hi-Fi*. But their remix work and side projects of late have worked their charms and had me anticipating this one. As productive as the Corporation is, *The Mirror Conspiracy* is only its second album proper. From the start, it's apparent how much of an improvement this is. It's better produced, sonically rich and the songs are just plain better. The Corporation continues to explore its fascination with global rhythms, marrying them to their own cosmopolitan brand of trip-hop. Pam Bricker contributes ace vocals on several cuts, which helps elevate the album to one smoky and seductive number for the armchair superspy.

The Chillout Room 2
(Columbia)

Late-night ears are treated to two discs this time 'round, which manage to include a wide range of downtempo artists, both famous and obscure. You're likely to have heard the famous stuff before – from Moby, Orbital, The Crystal Method, Underworld and Primal Scream – but the obscure is where the real gems lie, anyway. Bent's "Good Bloke" is moving and melodic in a cinematic sense, while Kinobe's "Skyscrapper" aims to reach such heights as well. Showing impeccable taste, the collection closes with "Approximate Mood Swing No. 2," a recent cut from Art of Noise, without whom none of this would be possible.

Various:01 Dancemusic: Modernlife
(V2)

Once again showcasing a fine electronica lineup, the V2 label births a compilation that's miles above the last one, *What the Funk You Waitin' For?* The downfall of *Funk* was the sheer excess of disco-y remixes, which *Various* wisely avoids. It still goes the remix route rather than presenting originals, but when you consider the level of talent of those tweaking the knobs this time around – The Chemical Brothers, Jazzanova, The Moog Cookbook – who the hell would be crazy enough to complain? The featured cut is Angelmoon's "He's All I Want," a '70s throwback with a killer guitar line that feels like a great summer single. Underworld, Moby and Mercury Rev all are here, remixed to fine (if lengthy) effect, but the cake is quietly taken with the closing "King Kong" from Regular Fries, a monster of a laid-back chillout classic in the making. Here's hoping *Various* soon spins into an *02*.

Apollo Four Forty
Gettin' High on Your Own Supply
(550)

Somewhat fresh after providing *Lost in Space* with its bangin' theme song, @440 follow-up with a long-player that seems intent on capturing a little of Fatboy Slim big-beat bonanza. Not that that's a bad thing, because they do it very well. From the opening "Stop the Rock," it's clearly evident these guys are only here to party. Throw in some reggae influences ("Heart Go Boom"); a raucous, Beastie Boys-like rocker ("Stadium Parking Lot") and the *LIS* theme for good measure, and a good time was had by all.

<<rinôçérôse>>
Installation Sonore
(V2)

The French duo of <<rinôçérôse>> is unlike anything I've ever heard before. Their music mixes house with rock to create something wholly unique and refreshing. The album begins with a beat-laden rocker, incorporates Latin sounds at its midpoint and then turns into a blissful high near the end with the majestic "Popular Mechanics." The end result is a most unexpected surprise.

DJ John Howard
San Francisco Sessions: Vol. 2
(Om)

In a continuing mix series spotlighting different DJs, Bay Area DJ John Howard takes his turn at the turntables. His mix is heavy on the house, but his inclusion of darker cuts from Midnight City Soul Affair, The Deal and even Underworld is appreciated. Groove Collective ends it all on a nice, soulful note. Plastic Avengers and Martin Solveig also are worked into the oft-intoxicating mix.

Luke Vibert / BJ Cole
Stop the Panic
(Astralwerks)

Years from now, when scholars start to study the emergence of electronic music, I hope this record is looked upon as a seminal album of the genre. An unusual pairing of whacked-out Vibert with ex-Shadows steel guitarist Cole, *Stop the Panic* represents a major inroad in demonstrating electronic music's potential as not only entertainment, but an art form. For one thing, the songs illustrate a range of styles and emotions – exotica on "Swing Lite – Alright," Pizzicato Five-style fun on "Baby Steps," hip-hop on "Hipalong Hop." What could have come across as schizophrenic flows quite well, as each track is rich in melody in its own right, even despite the disparate influences.

Console
Rocket in the Pocket
(Matador)

Amidst all the modem noise and samples of Trio and Art of Noise, there's some real music. It may be cold and calculated, but dammit – it's *music*, and it moves. Hailing from Germany (where one of its members tooled with The Notwist – and it shows), Console has a welcome sense of humor, evidenced by such titles as "My Dog Eats Beats" and "Pigeon Party." They're also inventive; the final cut, "Walks Like a Worm," actually is divided among 17 tracks. It's decidedly *not* engineered for dancing (thank God), although "14 Zero Zero" – not available on the import version – is a Gap commercial waiting to happen. Or so says the record company. And I happen to happily agree.

Stereolab
The First of the Microbe Hunters
(Elektra)

Do these guys ever sleep? The *Cobra and Phases* LP was just released months ago, and along comes this. In actuality, it's a seven-song EP, but given the band's inclination for long jams (even 10 minutes long), it feels full-length. It also feels like a companion disc to *Cobra and Phases*, carrying the same look and the same glorious Stereolab sound. Playing it in repeat mode, it becomes quite hypnotic.

Dimitri from Paris

Thunderball
Ambassadors of Style
(ESL Music)

After several appearances on various ESL comps, the duo Thunderball emerge with a nice, near-explosive full-length *LP. Primarily* artisans of the drum-and-bass groove, the 'Ball boys do take a sharp left toward funk with the midpoint "Pop the Trunk," a juicy move that trickles through to "Late Nite Trick" and the title cut, before settling down to more downtempo affairs with "The Moon, the Sky." Overall, a satisfying debut from an emerging artist on one hell of a reliable label.

Olive
Trickle
(Maverick)

Olive's sophomore effort is a lot like their debut, in that it boasts a strong single that can't quite anchor the rest of the album. Whereas *Extra Virgin* had an original in "You're Not Alone," *Trickle*'s strongest spot is "I'm Not in Love" – a 10cc cover, which proves problematic for the tunes they *did* write. That's not to say the record is bad – just uneven. The duo is perfectly capable of working up a heady trip-hop vibe, but is equally adept at producing songs too slight to hide the fluff. Still very much an act-in-progress, Olive will find and settle into its groove.

Dimitri from Paris
A Night at the Playboy Mansion
(Astralwerks)

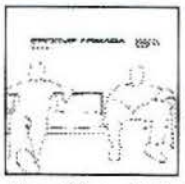
Hipper than you-or-me Dimitri from Paris DJ'd Hef's birthday soiree at the Playboy Mansion, and well, why the hell wasn't *I* invited? At least I have a souvenir with this terrific mix CD. Sporting a sound far different than Dimitri's *Sacrebleu* record, this *Night* is one with disco on the brain. Smartly (and luckily for us), Dimitri's choice of vinyl never once veers toward the obvious or overplayed. There's not a single Bee Gees or Gloria Gaynor among the bunch. Hell, most of the 14 selections come from the '90s! It kicks off with Bah Samba's Latin-flavored "Reach Inside" and ultimately flows into cool cuts from Astrojazz and Stetasonic, ending with a Dimitri mix of Ashford and Simpson's "Found a Cure." Man, all the sex that must've gone down that night...

Satoshi Tomiie
Full Lick
(Sony)

Dark techno and drum-and-bass are on the menu for Tomiie, featuring lush vocals from Kelli Ali, formerly of Sneaker Pimps. "Come to Me" is a nice, piano-based breather, while "Heaven" flares with urban soul. Clearly, he has epic ambitions, but the tunes are a bit too repetitive to achieve that level of greatness.

Pills Fr
Musicsoldia
(TVT)

While fellow Frenchmen Air take a walk on the mild side, Pills is up for some wild nights, and this is in a *Run Lola Run* state of mind (Pills contributed a cut to that film's juiced-up soundtrack). This effort is equally pumped with thick, sticky beats as Anthony Sandor gives props to parties, loose sex and "big tits." In other words, like a R-rated Daft Punk.

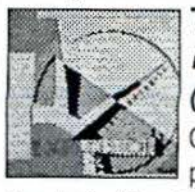


Groove Armada
Vertigo
(Jive Electro)

With the blissfully chilled hit "At the River," the duo Groove Armada set fire to the rest of the world. As they aim to conquer America, *Vertigo* holds several more tricks up its sleeve, as an aural kaleidoscope that shapes up to be one of the more pleasant surprises so far this year. The variety of songs proves the Groove is no one-trick pony – sample the lush nightbeats of "Dusk You & Me," the woozy lounge ambience of "Inside My Mind (Blue Skies)" or flat-out booty-shakers like "If Everybody Looked the Same." After a dozen songs, Fatboy Slim throws in a floor-filler of a bonus: a remix of "I See You Baby." This is one disc that shakes its ass like nobody's biz.

Clinton
Disco & the Halfway to Discontent
(Astralwerks)

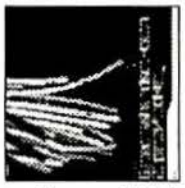
Not really "disco" in the true sense of the word, the debut of Clinton is nonetheless a danceable disc, albeit quietly so. Allow me to explain: The guys behind Clinton are the same ones who front Cornershop ("Brimful of Asha"), and the only real difference between the two is that this is better! Tjinder Singh doesn't so much *sing* songs as he does read lyrics, casting a half-apathetic, relaxed feel over the proceedings – quite honestly, a perfect approach. Much of the record – what with vocals fed through a computer and endlessly loopy blips and bleeps – sounds like what someone in the '70s might think music would sound like 30 years later. Mildly infectious tracks like "People Power in the Disco Hour" and "The Hot for May Sound" seem to celebrate disco as much as decimate it, with the latter cut segueing smoothly into "Hosanna" just to remind you to smile. Not that you'll need the prodding.



The Modernist
Explosion
(Matador)

One Burger, please – hold the Ink. The Modernist is a *nom de plume* for J. Burger – he being half of the Burger/Ink duo, whose *Las Vegas* was a modest, minimalist electronic treat. This *Explosion* – which actually is purposely sedate – is very much in line with that

album – namely, beautiful and atmospheric synth-pop building quietly, one layer at a time.



Gatecrasher
Disco-Tech
(Sony)
Gatecrasher is not an artist, but rather a UK hot spot, and this double-disc set approximates the sounds you might hear there on any given night. Leftfield starts it off properly with "Afrika Shox," giving way to lesser known (and lesser) artists. This collection would work best either as a souvenir for those who have been there or a glimpse of what's being missed to those who haven't.

Future, Jazz
(Instinct)
Jazz has undergone so many mutations that I'm not sure we can even call the music on this collection "jazz" at all. It's electronica, for sure, but designed for the mind and not the dancefloor, with talents like Spacetime Continuum, Innerzone Orchestra and Kruder & Dorfmeister. If you're familiar with those artists, you already know the late-night vibe this disc provides. As is the case with all Instinct releases, the total lack of liner notes is frustrating.

Fatboy Slim
The Fatboy Slim/Norman Cook Collection
(Hip-O)

Fatboy Slim
On the Floor at the Boutique
(Astralwerks)
Both are tie-over albums until Mr. Cook releases a proper follow-up to *You've Come a Long Way, Baby*. And from a sheer standpoint of fun, I'll give the oh-so-slight edge to *Collection*. It's a hodge-podge compilation of early Slim work under the more soulful outfit Beats International, interspersed with his more well-known remixes for Lunatic Calm, Jean-Jacques Perrey and A Tribe Called Quest. The Beats International output is hard to find, and it's good stuff, as well as a harbinger of the big-beat smashes he would soon produce under the Slim name. *On the Floor* showcases Slim as DJ at the UK club The Boutique, here giving a continuous mix set that begins with Michael Viner's Incredible Bongo Band's "Apache" and ends with Slim's own anthem "The Rockafella Skank." Sometimes playing with the speed of his source material, Slim overlaps the cuts in seamless style, but the overall mix is hampered a bit by a second-act darker turn, redeemed with a late-in-the-game return to Hammond-flavored floor stompers.

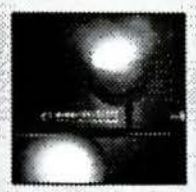
Pole
3
(Matador)
If you didn't get enough snapping, crackling and popping the first and second time around, the one-man Pole quietly offers you *3*. Again using his broken instrument to create vinyl-worthy ambient dub, Pole makes unconventional, slightly unsettling music that demands several a good, strong listen.

Brassic Beats USA
(Skint)
Superstars – both present and future – of UK's Skint label are showcased on this fine compilation. Points are won by *not* going with a household Fatboy Slim cut, but the relatively rare "Sho Nuff." By the same token, Lo Fidelity Allstars are repped by a B-side, the sublime "Puppy Phat Number One." Other top-notch acts include Space Raiders, Indian Ropeman and the all-female, organs-a-blazin' Electrelane, who handily steal the show.

Bossa Mundo ... when brazil meets the world.
(Wave)
There are some exciting things happening musically around the globe, and one of the most interesting is the Japanese and Europeans' hybrid of home-grown electro-jazz with the bossa-nova beats born in Brazil. *Bossa Mundo* is a mere snapshot of this scene, but it's a terrific starting point for the uninitiated. (If you're familiar with the works of Thievery Corporation, you've already got a taste for this world blend.) Highlights include Tom & Joyce (fresh off ESL's *Jet Society* comp), Jazzanova, Utsumi, Kyoto Jazz Massive and two tracks from Calm.

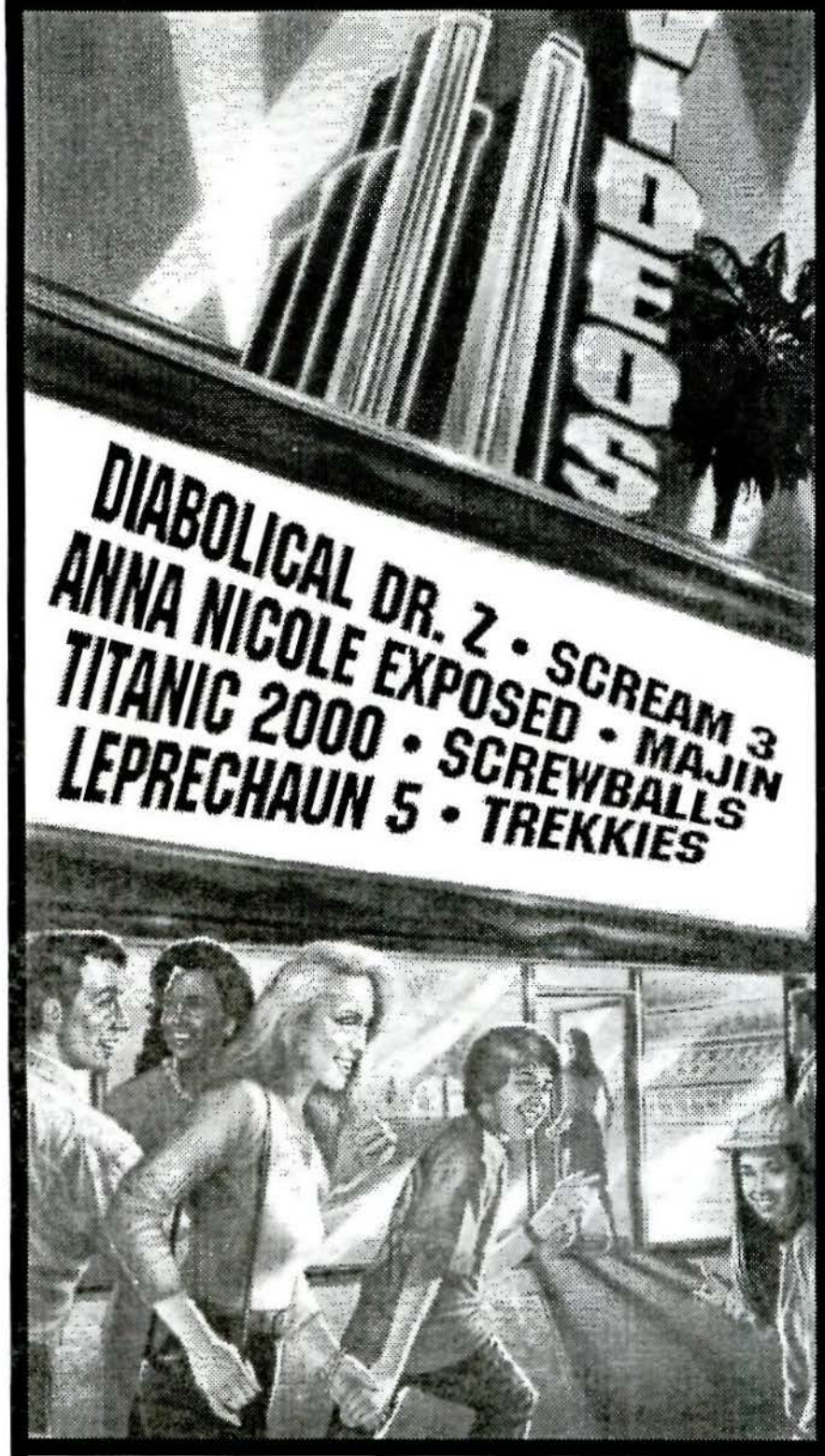
H

FF



On *Buy Now ... Saved Later* (V2), **One Minute Silence** takes on sacred cows like corrupt politicians and church officials, but does so via abrasive heavy metal. In other words, we take no issue with what the say – just how they say it. **Reel Big Fish** is back with a re-release of its first album, entitled *Everything Sucks* (Mojo), and I couldn't have said it better myself. Elsewhere in the world is **Ricardo Lemvo & Makina Loca**, a Cuban outfit playing feel-good afropop on *São Salvador* (Putumayo). The same label also gives us another of its theme compilations, ***Republica Dominicana***, this one featuring a who's-who of merengue artists from (as the title suggests) the Dominican Republic. **The Ali Khan Band**'s *Zindagi* (City of Tribes) begins wonderfully, with a world-beat vibe reminiscent of Afro Celt Sound System, but as soon as the rap vocals begin, the luster is all but lost. One Mr. **Dalvin DeGrate** – formerly of R&B group Jodeci – goes solo with *Met.a.mor.phic* (Maverick), and appears to be casting himself in the Puff Daddy mold, open shirt and all. Anyone else have a problem with an artist who has a track entitled "Soft & Wet – Interlude," yet thanks Jesus Christ first and foremost in the liner notes? A sign of the impending times, ***Jetset 2: Airport Lounge*** is a disc crammed with 150 free MP3s among a slew of genres (and among a range of quality). You can get yours free at *www.riffage.com*. Want more free tunes featuring total unknowns? Then head over to *www.peoplesound.com* and do some clicking for ***Musicspecialedition***. Jazzanova, Thievery Corporation and Bobby Hughes Experience standout on the ultra-chilled ***Hi:Fidelity Lounge – Volume One: Subterranean Soundtracks*** (Guidance). The best lounge compilation in years is ***The Later Lounge*** (Later Magazine), sporting 20 fun cuts from Paul Nero's "This Is Soul" and James Clarke's "Blow Up a Go-Go" to selections from the *Bullitt* and *Mission: Impossible* soundtracks – too bad it's not for sale! The late **Michael Hutchence**'s solo debut – named *Michael Hutchence* (V2), of course – sounds virtually nothing like INXS, which is both good and bad. Good in that he chose to try something different, bad in that it fails to hook the ear like his old band could in seconds. The clumsily titled ***Wallpaper* Mach 1.5: The Limitless Luxury Collection*** (Sweet Mother) is a *Wallpaper* magazine spin-off aimed at home relaxation, boasting ace performances by Air, Thievery Corporation, Jazzanova, Arling & Cameron, United Future Organization and Ryuichi Sakamoto. Whatever happened to **P.M. Dawn**? I don't know, but here's *The Best of P.M. Dawn* (V2), with the soulful hip-hop hits "Looking Through Patient Eyes," "I'd Die Without You" and the Spandau Ballet-sampling "Set Adrift on Memory Bliss," along with three new remixes. **Guided by Voices** take a breather with the *Hold on Hope EP* (TVT), but at nine tracks, it feels like a whole new LP.

edited by Rod Lott



BEFORE OUR FEATURE...

Videos reviewed in **HITCH** receive star ratings based not on artistic merit, but on levels of enjoyment, from ★☆☆☆☆ (as much fun as a funeral) to ★★★★★ (fun, fun, fun 'til daddy takes the TV away).

RENT-O-MATIC

5 Dinosaur Movies Far Better Than *Dinosaur*

- *Dinosaurus!* (1960, Paramount Home Video)
- *Jurassic Park* (1993, MCA/Universal Home Video)
- *Walking with Dinosuars* (1999, 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment)
- *Carnosaur 2* (1994, New Horizons Home Video)
- *Fantastic Dinosaurs of the Movies* (1992, GoodTimes Home Video)

The Tigger Movie
(2000)
Walt Disney Home Video
★☆☆☆☆

That hyperactive, speech-impaired tiger gets his own movie, during which he spends most of the time moping and edging toward suicide. As it begins, Tigger bounds right up to single mom Kanga and asks if she's "up for some bouncin' today." She declines, thus ending any chances of a great movie, if you know what I mean.

Winnie the Pooh takes a secondary role – just enough to get everyone's butts in trouble with a swarm of bees, though. Then Christopher Robin shows up at the end, after all the work has been done, that pansy ass.

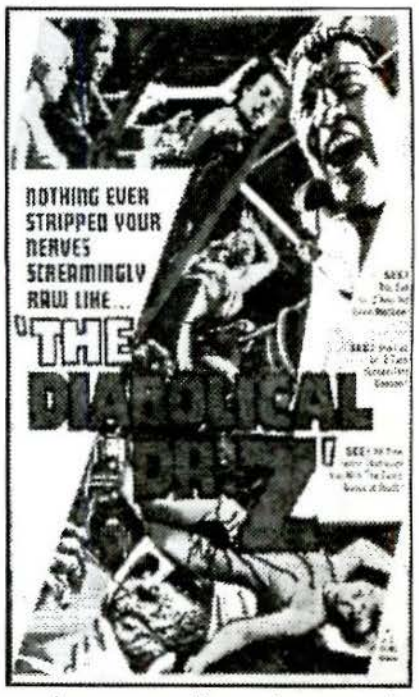
The Diabolical Dr. Z
(1965)
Something Weird Video
★★★★☆

The ad copy for Jess Franco's twisted little horror film promises, "Nothing ever stripped your nerves screamingly raw like *The Diabolical Dr. Z!*" And that's true, but mostly because my nerves have never been stripped before, screamingly raw, pan-fried or otherwise.

In a crisp, letterboxed print in stark black-and-white, one Dr. Zimmer – "Z" only to pals, presumably – bides his time wearing Coke-bottle glasses and sticking syringes full of ungodly fluids into kitty cats. Some poor schmo stumbles to their door, so naturally they take him into the lab, shove a needle through his head and make him their slave.

Then, with his daughter Irma pushing his wheelchair, he crashes some sort of international cerebral summit, Dr. Z tells his peers about his research. They don't exactly scream "Diabolical!," but they sure don't cotton to it, either, enraging the good – I mean, diabolical – doctor to the point of a fatal heart attack.

Destined to carry on her father's work, Irma goes to catch some dinner theater. She sees the brief show of Miss Death, a young blonde in a see-through black leotard who performs a bizarre interpretive dance number on a floor painted to resemble a spider's web. (Okay, so it's not really a "dance" number, as she mostly shimmies across the floor on her tum-tum at a snail's pace until she reaches Mortimer Snerd's transvestite cousin. But this display of talent is met with voluminous and approving applause all the same.)



Irma, needless to say, is inspired, so she decides to fake her own death. What Miss Death's performance had to do with this epiphany was lost on me, but face it – she's creepy anyway. To me, the smileless Irma looks like the lead singer of The Cardigans after being locked inside the freezer at KFC for a week.

To fake said death, Irma picks up a hitchhiker that resembles Irma only in that she is female. After stopping for a swim, Irma runs the girl over with the car. As she's dousing the vehicle with gasoline from her neighborhood Mobil (who knew Franco was into product placement?), she gets burned herself, which causes her to acquire what looks like a guacamole beard. No problem –

with the help of a mirror, she simply numbs her face and carves a scalpel into it. (I don't know about you, but I get mixed up enough just trying to trim my sideburns in the mirror.)

With her death faked, she poses as a Hollywood big shot to lure Miss Death into her clutches. The ruse works, as Miss Death is as dumb as rocks, and Irma uses her to do her dirty work, murdering the doctors who laughed at her father.

With lots of needle-stickin' action, *Dr. Z* is a first-rate flick from Franco, who has an eye for shot composition and a feel for ambience. That he chose to use his talents for films like this instead of stuffy arthouse fare is a gift to us.

Scream 3
(2000)
Dimension Home Video
★★★☆☆

The third time is not necessarily the charm in the case of *Scream 3*. Though the principals and director Wes Craven for another go-round, series creator/writer Kevin Williamson is MIA. Though I never thought I'd say this, his contribution is sorely missed. In a nutshell, it's still clever – just not *fun* clever.

Sidney (Neve Campbell) has moved to Hollywood to escape her demons, but no sooner does production on another film based on her life begin when that damned Ghostface shows up and starts offing those involved. Once she learns of the murders, Sidney starts to pout and bite her lower lip a lot because she's, like, scared. David Arquette limps in to protect her, with the skeletal structure formerly known as Courteney Cox in tow.

It all culminates in an intense but incredibly overlong showdown in a Tinseltown mansion, with Sidney getting all Sigourney Weaver on Ghostface's ass. This sequence alone seems to have half a dozen endings and twice as many red herrings, which is a bit of an insult.

New to the series are Matt Keeslar, the disgustingly thin Parker Posey and the breasts of Jenny McCarthy. On a high point, cameos are provided by Carrie Fisher, Roger Corman and the stoner team of Jay and Silent Bob.

Scream 3*'s Courteney Cox just realized who she's married to.*

After Midnight
(1989)
MGM/UA Home Video
★★★☆☆

Yet another horror anthology in the wake of the cable success of *Tales from the Crypt*, *After Midnight* emerged from the questionable talents of Jim and Ken Wheat, authors of *The Fly II*, *The Birds II* and one of those made-for-TV Ewok movies. As you'd expect, this is equally lackluster, but worth a look.

A college psych class with a freaky professor (Ramy Zada) provides the framework, as he has students tell each other stories of fear. First up is a couple stranded on an out-of-the-way road who goes to a spooky old house for help. Second is a pointless tale of four high-school girls out for a night on the town who end up menaced by a greasy gas station attendant and his ferocious dogs (who end up tearing the fat girl from *Mr. Belvedere* to pieces).

Marg Helgenberger stars in the final story, of a late-night answering service employee who's receiving threatening calls from a psycho. As is clearly evident, the Wheats don't know how to end any of these stories, though the first one offers a bit of gore to compensate.

Terminal Entry
(1986)
Celebrity Home Entertainment
★★☆☆☆

Essentially *WarGames* made for the cost of a #10 combo meal at Taco Bell, the jaw-droppingly dated *Terminal Entry* centers on a group of computer geeks who sit around playing simulation games all day long. Their newest obsession is one called – ready for this? – *Terminal Entry*, in which you maneuver terrorists to plunder and kill.

Only unbeknownst to them, it's not a game at all! They've hacked into a military computer and are ordering real-life terrorists to make real-life attacks and real-life kills! Crazy kids! But it gets even crazier when they order the terrorists to attack the kids themselves, and that's kind of the tip-off to them that they're playing for keeps.

Do our socially challenged teens – including the nerdy guy from *Mr. Belvedere* – have what it takes to fend off a highly trained and highly armed unit of bad guys? Well, when one of the boys puts a tie around his head *Rambo*-style, I guess the answer's a resounding yes!

Truth be told, there is no reason to watch this past the initial eight minutes, when former Playmate of the Year Barbara Edwards steps out of the shower. Ever so slowly.

Lake Placid
(1999)
20th Century Fox Home Entertainment
★★★☆☆

Since it's written by overrated TV *wünderkind* David E. Kelley, I call this one *Ally-gator McBeal*. And trust me, I'm not far off.

With a rash of crocodile attacks in an otherwise uneventful lake (not called Lake Placid, but Black Lake – go figure), game warden Bill Pullman and museum employee Bridget Fonda must overcome their differences in order to successfully thwart this overgrown monster. And Fonda just as well could've been Calista Flockhart, because that's exactly how Kelley has written her.

In fact, Kelley pretty much wrote all of *Lake Placid* as if it were just another installment of his tired episodic series – all the characters have semi-silly names, act with such whimsy and are quite quick with the acid tongues. (Example: The ol' rotund-pelvised Betty White calls someone "fuckmeat," tee-hee!) That said, he can script a good croc attack – though anyone could, he doesn't shy away from the severed heads or chewed-up cows.

Pitch Black
(2000)
USA Home Video
★☆☆☆☆

A great concept does not make a great movie if there's nothing more to it than that. Case in point: the sci-fi thriller *Pitch Black*, the plot of which can be summarized in this one line: After crash-landing on a seemingly deserted planet, a group of space travelers happen upon killer aliens that only come at night ... and a solar eclipse is about to occur.

Indeed, that does happen, but once it does, there is nothing to build upon it. Australian Radha Mitchell is the captain of the ship who leads her charges against apparently insurmountable odds. One of her passengers is the bald,

bass-voiced Vin Diesel, portraying some sort of super-criminal with silver eyes who, as luck would have it, can only see in the dark. He's the one mean guy who you know will find it in his heart to turn nice somewhere during Act III, at least long enough to save some people.

Once our group crashes, they find an abandoned ship they believe could be used to escape, if only they can transfer the power source from their now-useless ship to this unharmed one. As they're doing so, darkness comes, and so do the aliens. As is becoming rote in films today, the aliens are total creations of CGI, so they never look real, as if you get to see them much at all. Most sightings of these creatures are limited to flying swarms of them, which makes them look like toy jacks. Standing still, they kind of resemble black woodpeckers. Either way, they're not scary.

Pitch Black is just plain void of suspense or imagination – a description befitting of every tired *Alien* retread of the last 20 years. Directed and co-written by David N. Twohy (the "N" must stand for *"NOOO!!!"*), it aims to be arty, given its limited color palette, barren setting and clunky dialogue. Twohy may have written *The Fugitive*, but has since graced us with the likes of *Terminal Velocity*, *The Arrival*, *G.I. Jane* and *Waterworld* – poor signs all.

Mitchell can be commended for not patterning her character after Sigourney Weaver – she's vulnerable and gives it some depth. She's also easy on the eyes. The improbably named Diesel, however, is goofy – all attitude, zero ability. Not that he's given much to do, other than run fast, bare his muscles and shave his head using a shiv and motor oil.

Before the story even really gets rolling, *Pitch Black* has revealed itself to be a cheap, amateurish production whose only thrill for the audience will come when it's finally over. In that regard, it reminded me a lot of *Bats*, only there was a lot less to laugh at. Ditch *Pitch*.

No. 1 Licensed to Love and Kill (1986)
Puerto Rico Productions
★★★★★

Absolutely fascinating in a car-wreck sort-of way, the clumsily titled *No. 1 Licensed to Love and Kill* is Puerto Rico's answer to James Bond. And it's also one good reason not to let Puerto Rico join the States.

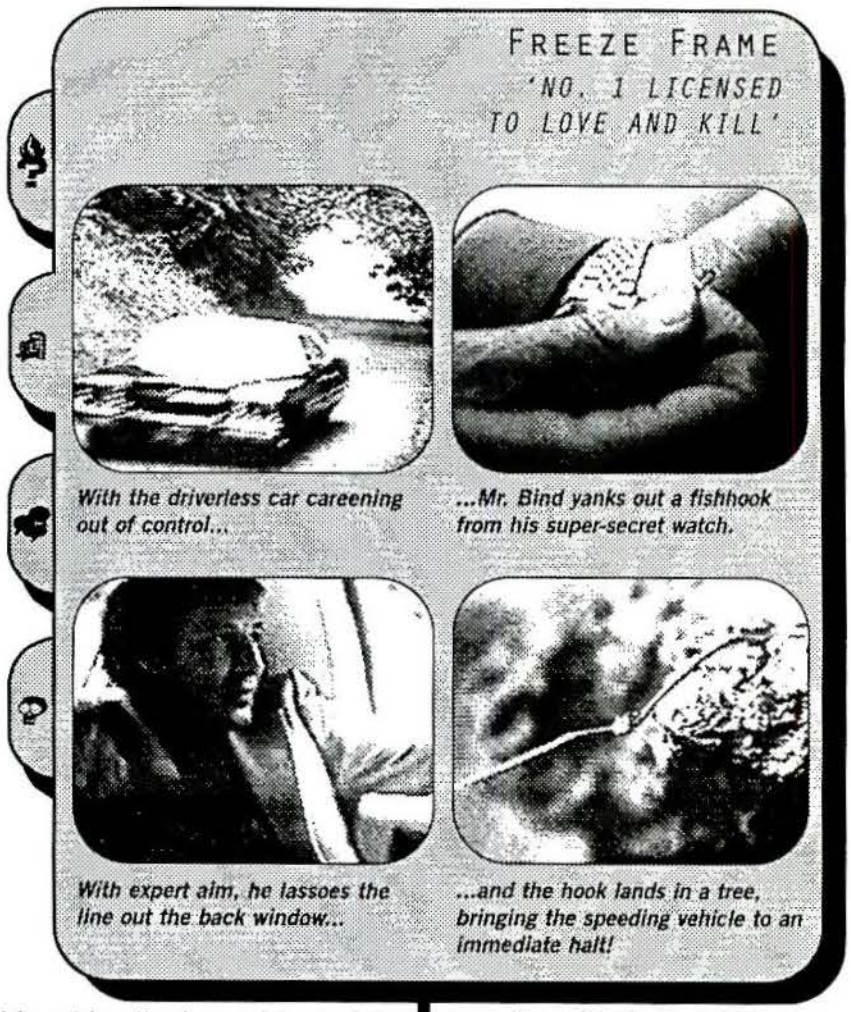
No. 1 refers to the handle of Britain's top secret agent, with the he-manish name of *Charles Bind*. He's played by Gareth Hunt, who looks very British and very much like a squirrel. In the opening scene, he says via narration, "I ask myself, 'What am I doing?'" One wonders if this line was scripted or merely Hunt's personal assessment of his role in this stinker, and either they didn't have the editing budget to take it out or they just plain didn't care.

It doesn't matter; it's not like you can see what's going on in this scene, anyway. As with the rest of the movie, it's criminally underlit. You know how the Bond movies always begin with a quick, unrelated action scene? That's kind of what they do here, only everything that follows seems unrelated, too.

Just so you won't spend the rest of the feature wondering if they're purposely ripping off James Bond, the opening credits are totally Bondian, except that instead of having them unspool to a sublime John Barry theme, they play against what sounds like a song reject from *Grease 2*.

The plot has No. 1 assigned to retrieve lost American diplomat Lord Dangerfield. Before jetting off to the U.S., he visits this flick's version of Q for the requisite cool gadgets and supplies. This Q has little more to offer than the knock-your-socks-off technology of *magnetic ball bearings!*

Dangerfield is being blackmailed by the evil Senator Orchid, who apparently is trying to compensate for being saddled with such a girlie last name. I mean, this guy is flat-out *mean*. He shoots skeet out on the beach using real, live human beings! He flame-broils


FREEZE FRAME
'NO. 1 LICENSED TO LOVE AND KILL'
With the driverless car careening out of control...
...Mr. Bind yanks out a fishhook from his super-secret watch.
With expert aim, he lassoes the line out the back window...
...and the hook lands in a tree, bringing the speeding vehicle to an immediate halt!

his whip-slinging midget sidekick (who looks like an Indian Roger Ebert) for no apparent reason, leaving only his Kenney shoes, then yuks it up and makes an uncalled-for "small fry" joke. He knowingly allows one of his mansion whores to take a swim in a pool of acid. He even keeps a cageful of hussies out back, whom he fancies poking with sticks.

Senator Orchid is aided by Jensen, a throaty henchman with pointy metal fingernails. They have their staff professor create a No. 1 doppelganger to help further their devious plan, exactly whatever that may be.

But No. 1 seems oblivious. When Orchid sends an all-purpose leather-masked bad guy out to chase him on a motorcycle, No. 1 calmly reacts by using his car's giant retractable saw blade to cut the fellow's chopper in half. It is here where I call the filmmakers' morals into question – they'll allow an innocent girl to have all the flesh stripped off her in a chemical plunge, but they shy away from dissecting an unlikable thick-necked tuffie?

No. 1 seems more interesting in bedding the various oft-topless women waltzing in and out of this picture (after all, it wasn't retitled *The Man from S.E.X.* for nothing!), like the car rental clerk Sheila, who wears (to use the term lightly) a short, tight T-shirt reading "RENT ME."

And all the above is just the *first* 45 minutes! The level of incompetence here is off the charts. The director is so *not* directing that his characters stand *totally* out of frame while speaking at times – and so far out of frame that even letterboxing wouldn't fix it. It's as if his nephew was visiting the set and said, "Uncle Lindsay, can I control the camera? *Pleeeeeaaaaase?*"

"Well ... okay, Billy!"

No. 1 is a steaming, must-see lump of No. 2.

Fade to Black (1980)
Anchor Bay Entertainment
★★☆☆☆

If anything, *Fade to Black* serves as a warning for overconsumption of B-movies. As a loser, Dennis Christopher sits in his dark bedroom all day, smoking cigarettes, wearing a funny hat and projecting films onto his wall. It only takes a few appearances of his wheelchair-bound aunt and her shrill, annoying schtick to send him

past the breaking point.

After he accidentally kills her, he decides this murder thing ain't too shabby, so he plots to off those people who humiliate him daily, but does so dressed as characters from his favorite movies, like *Dracula* and *The Mummy*. He also falls in love with a Marilyn Monroe lookalike (Linda Kerridge), who takes a *Psycho*-like shower.

A horror film done so poorly that it plays like a bad Touchstone comedy, *Fade to Black* is nowhere near as promising as it sounds.

Reindeer Games
(2000)
Dimension Home Video

★★★☆☆

They don't make heist movies like they used to, and John Frankenheimer doesn't make movies as he used to, and here's why.

Ben Affleck stars as Rudy, a small-time car thief who serves his "hard five" sentence. Upon the day of release, he's met at the gate by the cute and comely Ashley (Charlize Theron), whose letters gave Rudy hope and something to look forward to all those years. They meet, eat and go right to a rather furious, hard-on-the-furniture round of lovemaking. Their bliss is soon interrupted by the unexpected arrival of Ashley's brother Monster (a uncharacteristically greasy Gary Sinise) and his gun-toting minions, who wish to use Rudy's criminal knowledge to pull off a Christmas Eve robbery of a local Indian casino.

As expected, everything is Not What It Seems, as *Reindeer Games* is stuffed full of mistaken identities deceptions and an assortment of various twists and turns – perhaps even more than usual, coming from the pen of screenwriter Ehren Kruger, whose scripts for *Arlington Road* and *Scream 3* are noted for packing more twists than an old guy's Dunkin Donuts sack.

Games relies more on suspense than action, but Frankenheimer (*The Manchurian Candidate*) is a pro at both, so he's on familiar terrain, and does a credible job. It's certainly better than his last directorial routing, the Robert DeNiro starrer *Ronin*, which despite some ace car-chase sequences, came off heavy-handed.

Miles from *Forrest Gump*, Sinise chews the scenery, and clearly relishes doing so. It's a wild part for him, and he portrays low-class scuz like the best of him. As for his onscreen sibling Theron, well – Charlize, your range (or lack thereof) is showing. And maybe it's just me, but a woman as underdeveloped as her should not be so quick to take off her clothes as often as she does.

As for the hero, they should never have let poor Affleck join in these *Reindeer Games*. He manages to be mildly likable, but at no time do you think of him as anything but the cocky, smart-ass Ben Affleck. No amount of arm tattoos and prison lingo would make me believe Affleck as a convict, especially when the film ends with a shot of him doing the now-patented Affleck move – thrust the jaw, run your tongue between your lower teeth and lip, and muster a cocky smile because goddammit, you're Ben Affleck.

Screwballs
(1983)
Warner Home Video

★★☆☆☆

Among all the *Porky's* rip-offs and T&A romps, *Screwballs* – the mighty Roger Corman's attempt at grabbing horny teens' allowances – is one of the most repellent. Basically, the "plot" is this: At the world's most depressing-looking high school, four or five guys – I really can't remember; they were all overly horny – make a bet at who will be able to see the breasts of popular virgin Purity Busch. Yep, that name is as clever as *Screwballs* gets, which is to say, not at all.

Oh, what a different movie *Screwballs* might have been had it stuck to this plot! But instead, it goes off on so many illogical tangents that we have the tragic tale of a boy who gets his penis stuck in a bowling ball, or the ironic spectacle of a slut's jelly-like chest pressed up against the back window of a van.

In the end, our zeroes – skilled they are at holding free breast exams at school – succeed, by blowing Purity's clothes off with a giant fan at an assembly. With patriotic music blaring in a way the composer certainly never intended, Purity's not-that-great bosom is shown in full close-up as the end credits roll.

What, no epilogue to tie up the loose ends? No jokey "where are they now?" titles? I wish we could measure how far back *Screwballs* set the women's movement, but the fact that it was co-written *by* a woman certainly pushes it back even further.

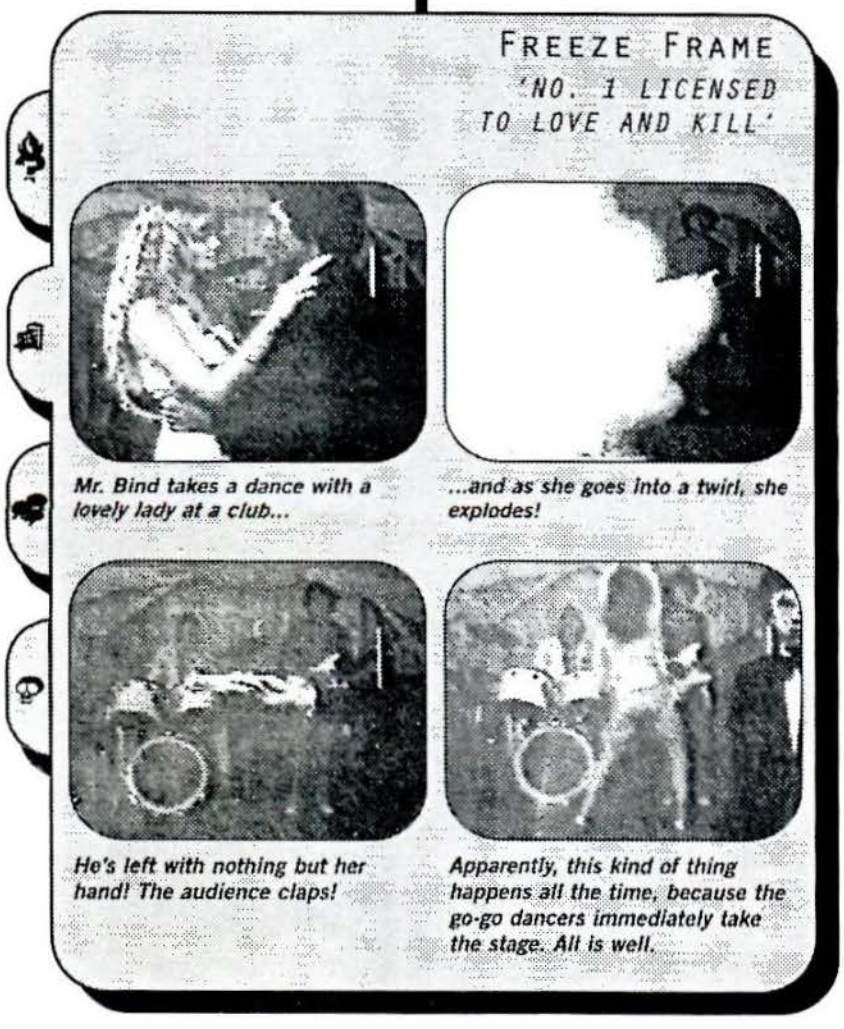
Air: Eating Sleeping Waiting and Playing
(1999)
Source/Astralwerks

★★★★☆

Part documentary, part concert film and part road movie, *Eating* chronicles French band Air as they travel the globe in support of their acclaimed 1998 album, *Moon Safari*. From New York to London to Paris, the hour-long film focuses on more of the backstage proceedings and less on the onstage magic they create, which is really my only complaint.

Directed in glorious black and white by Mike Mills (not of R.E.M.), it interviews roadies, fans and Nicolas & J.B., whose French accents are so thick, you need subtitles to understand them. But their music is universal, and has an open-door welcome in my heart.

The real treat here is the collection of four unconventional Air music videos, also directed by Mills, from the cartoony "Sexy Boy" to the ping-pong theatrics of "Kelly Watch the


FREEZE FRAME
'NO. 1 LICENSED TO LOVE AND KILL'
Mr. Bind takes a dance with a lovely lady at a club...
...and as she goes into a twirl, she explodes!
He's left with nothing but her hand! The audience claps!
Apparently, this kind of thing happens all the time, because the go-go dancers immediately take the stage. All is well.

Stars."

Double Jeopardy
(1999)
Paramount Home Video
★★★☆☆

Ashley Judd's breakthrough isn't the total waste of time most have made it out to be, but it's no winner in the logic department. Judd plays a housewife who is convicted of murdering her own husband, even though she didn't do it, primarily because he faked his own death.

When she finds out this nugget o' gossip, she decides to seek him out upon her release and kill him. After all, she's already been convicted of the crime, and since no one can be tried for the same crime twice, why not? (Actually, that's one big legal blooper – in the real world, she'd be back in the pen faster than her sister Wynonna can strip the meat off a turkey leg.)

BURNING QUESTIONS
'DOUBLE JEOPARDY'

1. How is Ashley Judd able to fly commercially to New Orleans while carrying a gun?
2. If Tommy Lee Jones manages the house for female ex-cons, isn't the place going *nuts* while he's off chasing Ashley across the country?
3. For such a high-profile murder case, wouldn't *someone* in the entire town of New Orleans recognize Bruce Greenwood?
4. How does Ashley pack so much hottieness into one little body?
5. Wouldn't someone as hot as she is become some dyke's bitch in prison?

Tommy Lee Jones, back for a third go-round as Lt. Gerard (except that his character has a different name, follows her all across the country on this cute little vengeance mission of hers. Couldn't she just run the registers at Wal-Mart like all her other ex-con girlfriends?

Not incredibly suspenseful but in enough forward-motion to merit a watch, *Double Jeopardy* is a semi-successful thriller.

The Suburbans
(1999)
Columbia/Tristar Home Video
★☆☆☆☆

The premise of *The Suburbans* at least sounds funny – or at least has the potential to sound funny – on paper: A young record exec convinces a one-hit wonder band to get back together after calling it quits a couple of decades ago. These normal, middle-aged guys then must deal with the mysteries of MTV and videos and other promotional gimmicks.

Except that Jennifer Love Hewitt – no comedienne she – is the young (*too* young) record exec, and the band members are just a bunch of dimwits. When the group includes Will Ferrell and fails to even let him be funny, the project was doomed from the get-go. Would it have killed them to let Will make a crack about his flesh wound smelling like almonds? Even Ben Stiller as a label lackey is unable to manage a laugh.

The reason behind the mediocrity? *The Suburbans* stars and was written and directed by one of those two guys responsible for *My Life's in Turnaround* and that equally retarded Fox sitcom that went through about six different names even though it only lasted about six weeks.

I will say this, though: At least he had the foresight to script a scene requiring Hewitt to hike up her skirt and show off her fabulous butt in purple panties.

The Sixth Sense
(1999)
Hollywood Pictures Home Video
★★★☆☆

Even if I hadn't had the film's "shock" ending ruined for me beforehand, I think I still would have been underwhelmed. *The Sixth Sense* is one of the slowest, most overrated and mediocre movies to be up for Best Picture in the '90s, much less be among the Top 10 grossing films of all-time.

Jeff Foxworthy refugee Haley Joel Osment is quite good as the little kid who has the cursed gift of seeing dead people wherever he goes, but he's none too happy about it, so luckily, Bruce Willis is on hand as a child psychologist ready to help sort out this nagging problem.

Personally, this sense would seem to me to be worth years of entertainment. You'd never know who would show up – one day it's some kid missing the back of his head, another day it's the little girl from *Lawn Dogs*, vomiting drain cleaner on your rug. C'mon, Haley – what's not to like?

The Bone Collector
(1999)
MCA/Universal Home Video
★★★☆☆

Paraplegic forensics expert Denzel Washington forges an unlikely alliance with oversized-lipped rookie cop Angelina Jolie to find a taxi-driving serial killer who deliberately leaves cryptic clues at the scenes of his crimes. Truth be told, the real question of suspense I had while watching *The Bone Collector* was not "Whodunit?" but "Have Angelina and her brother done it?"

I mean, look at them, hanging all over each other at the Oscars and the Golden Globes. They weren't coddling like siblings – they were positively *glowing* like a couple that only recently dove into the sex part. And then all the stuff she said about him ("I'm so in love with you right now!"), it just makes me wonder whose bones Angelina is really collecting.

I wouldn't put it past her – the chick is *weird*. She cuts herself, she collects knives, she starred in *Hackers*. Everything she does gives me the heebie-jeebies.

Oh, and the movie is okay.

Classroom Scare Films, Vol. 7: Drugs and Beyond
(2000)
Something Weird Video
★★★★☆

Jonesing for some more comical tirades against mind-alterating substances? Then tie one off and shoot these five shorts directly into your vein.

The oddly titled *Narcotics Part I – Goof Balls and Tea* deals with "adult tools" like, well, goof balls and tea. It's a "police science" film made for cops to show what happens when kids get mixed up with chemicals. "The goof ball has found a friend," says the narrator as another teen falls victim to the scourge. "Inflicting wounds may seem comical." But this little film is most notable for basically showing you how to harvest your own weed farm, step by step.

Such an explanation would have the parents of the next short in a tizzy. They're seated in a suburban living room, all *appalled at footage* of what they believe is a psychedelic LSD freakout. But Dr. Wright says, "Now, let's simmer down," for it was just an innocent school dance. The doc shuns them for jumping to conclusions, as well as the way they treat their kids. We see one guy berate his son thusly:

Dad: "I thought I told you to get a haircut!"

Son: "I had to study for the test!"

Dad: "It's always something!"

Another parent, hearing that shooters wear long-sleeve shirts to cover tracks, sneaks into her son's bedroom at night with a flashlight! One daughter tells her mom she shouldn't knock LSD if she hasn't tried it, to which the matronly woman quips, "Well, I don't need syphilis to know I don't want it!" Two points for Ma! (The credits note the production crew was made up of real teenagers, and it shows, what with its piss-poor framing.)

Narcotics: Pit of Despair equates drugs with being "every bit as deadly as a snake." It stars a young Kevin Tighe (the poor man's Brian Dennehy, from TV's *Emergency!*) as John, a chisel-featured collegian who makes the mistake of befriending Pete, the local pusher. (He's the one with the werewolf-esque goatee in case you confuse the two.) Pete takes John to what is perhaps the world's only drug party with streamers and balloons (or at least with balloons *not* stuffed in one's alimentary canal). Pete uses booze and floozies to convince John to "blast off to kicksville!" John looks at his first joint with the same wide-eyed awe as the characters in *Jurassic Park* did to the sight of dinosaurs, but turns out he smokes like a pro! Pretty soon, it's goodbye, school work and hello, heroin addiction!

The young star of the next short suffers an ever worse fate. He's a fuzzy-headed drag racer set for his first match behind the wheel. Too bad he gets involved with the dope (but at least he's kind enough to bail his druggie pals out of jail with his prize money). Shunning the advice of his mentor, George continues puffing, so of course his story is bound to end in a flaming fireball of death on the racetrack – and it does! The crash does not disappoint.

Last up is Encyclopedia Britannica's *Drug Addiction*, made in the day when jalopy rides were considered fun. Through surreal animation, we see what opiates, marijuana and cocaine do to our bodies. Through outrageous filmed footage, we see the results – namely, junkies hitting kids over the head with 2-by-4s in broad daylight! See Marty fall prey to the habit! See Marty drink pop (and glass!) from a broken bottle! See Marty cut his mouth all up and have a good laugh about it! See Marty rush into the corner store to let loose a dose of drug-induced diarrhea!

"Boy," says Tim Robbins in* Mission to Mars, *"I really hope we get to see some space monkeys."

Mission to Mars
(2000)
Touchstone Home Video
★★★★☆

Escape from Mars
(1999)
Paramount Home Video
★★☆☆☆

Apparently, Brian De Palma has shelved the Hitchcock homages so he could ape another esteemed cinematic master – Stanley Kubrick – for his latest flick, the big-budget sci-fi epic *Mission to Mars*. It aims very much to be another *2001* – the mystery is well in place, the pacing is deliberately slow, the feeling of reality is there.

And then he blows at the end with a wholly unnecessary visit to Mars' built-in planetarium and spook show, complete with crying aliens. It's the same problem that plagued the endings of *Contact* and *The Abyss*. For God's sake, when will Hollywood learn? *Don't show the aliens!*

But before all that, Don Cheadle heads an exploratory mission to the red planet that ends tragically, and only Cheadle survives. A rescue mission is deployed to save him, consisting of astropals Gary Sinise (sporting Maybelline MoistureLash), Tim Robbins, Jerry O'Connell and the delicious Connie Nielsen. Despite several obstacles – resulting, as expected, in the usual incredible DePalma set pieces – and even further tragedy, the team makes it to Mars. The scene in which Sinise stumbles upon a mentally unstable Cheadle in a makeshift greenhouse plays like something out of *Raising Cain*, or some nonexistent film where the white man busts in on Bob Marley's weed farm.

And soon this leads to the aforementioned *Twin Peaks*-esque trip to the "Golly Gee-Whiz" exhibit at the Mars State Fair, where all credibility is checked at the door for a laughs-aplenty sequence that clearly just should've been axed.

But up until then, *Mission* is pretty damn good. It's intelligent, well-made and looks fantastic. And then there's the ending, so goofy that all that's missing is the space monkey from *Lost in Space*.

If you want to see how bad it *could* have been, venture no further than the made-for-TV *Escape from Mars*, a perfectly average movie in which Mars looks remarkably like any old desert on the West Coast.

90210's Christine Elise heads up a five-man exploratory mission to the red planet, although she barely looks old or bright enough to man the drive-thru at Long John Silver's. Her crewmates also look like they were plucked straight from a frat mixer and suited up.

On their mission, their ship is threatened by a computer glitch that may very well ... well, *nothing*, really. A brief meteor shower is about all that gets in their way. The title is misleading, too, as they never try nor need to escape from Mars. They're on a two-year mission, and it's two years they stay. When the two years are up, it's hello, Earth. And goodbye, movie.

Madhouse
(1974)
HBO Video
★★★☆☆

One of the more twisted Vincent Price vehicles of this era, *Madhouse* features the great Price as a TV horror star named Dr. Death who comes under a fair amount of public scrutiny when his wives keep showing up dead. Did he do it? Others around him starts to die in devious, *Dr. Phibes*-type ways as the investigation heats up. The end has a cool twist.

I don't remember all that much about it, though. It was late and I was tired. But I remember liking it and there was this batty old hag who got off on spiders.

Curse of the Blair Witch
(1999)
Artisan Home Entertainment
★★★★☆

This mockumentary – produced for airing on the Sci-Fi Channel to promote *The Blair Witch Project* – is actually more entertaining than the film itself! This little special helped perpetuate the myth that the movie was the real deal, which is probably why it made so much coin.

In *Curse*, the mythos surrounding the woods and its various supernatural beings are explored, and even though they're largely conveyed via primitive drawings, it's scads more interesting than what those three kids came up with on their video camera.

The filmmakers actually do a fine job "faking" footage – specifically a '70-era speculation flick entitled *Mystic Occurrences* – to give the whole thing a gloss of authenticity. Let's hope *Blair Witch 2* is as good as this.

Majin, The Monster of Terror (1966)
Something Weird Video

★★★☆☆

This Japanese fantasy doesn't really kick in until after the first 30 minutes, when the requisite precocious youth with bad hair is attacked in the forest by skeleton hands and superimposed bedsheets standing in for ghosts.

But that's nothing compared to the havoc wreaked by the giant mountain god Majin. For the first half of the movie, Majin is simply a statue to be worshipped. But when angry villagers start hammering away at his head and cause it to bleed, well, who can blame Majin for opening up the ground so it can spit fire and swallow fat guys whole?

What heretofore was a blank face as threatening as Holly Hobbie is replaced with a blue-green demonic kabuki glare with one wave of Majin's stone arm. The big guy frees himself from his mountain home and goes to town to – in the finest tradition of Eastern cinema – smash some shit up.

The balsa wood flies as Majin destroys houses and randomly stops to impale citizens. At the end, he turns to dust, thus ending the carnage but quite clearly driving home the moral of the story: Don't stick steel spikes into the foreheads of statues in the mountains unless you want him to come alive and fuck up your village.

The Little Shop of Horrors (1960)
United American Video Corp.

★★★★☆

Considered a cult classic (thanks to its later life as a Broadway musical and big-budget remake), Roger Corman's original *The Little Shop of Horrors* is arguably one of the best shot-in-two-days films in history.

The simple tale of a sad-sack flower shop employee and his man-eating plant passed for "dark humor" back then. Today, it comes off as slapsticky, but still has considerable charms. Chief among them is Jack Nicholson, in a small role as a pain-craving dental patient, as well as Dick Miller, as a customer who loves to eat flowers. (Interestingly, Bill Murray played Jack's role in the remake *and* did the Miller bit in a similar *SNL* short film.)

Corman's direction is passable at best, making the film look as if it were being performed on the stage. The movie isn't exactly laugh-out loud funny, but the music is bonkers, the end a bit creepy.

Boozers and Losers Scare Films: Vol. 1 (2000)
Something Weird Video

★★★★☆

Think al-ke-hall never hurt anybody? Think again, with these five shorts of 100% pure proof!

As the cryptically titled *From 5 to 7:30* begins, the unseen Eddie has killed a couple innocent bystanders in a little drunken driving episode, and it has his high school classmates talking, particularly the ever-sullen, never-smiling Joe, who is quite pissed at Eddie and acts largely using his right hand. Joe can't seem to find a sympathetic ear at home, as his dad whips up a special pitcher of drinks with the same caution practiced by someone manning a meth lab. Pretty soon, Mom and Dad are blotto, talking about Dewey vs. Truman blah blah blah. It's enough to make Joe scream, "*MOTHER!* COULD WE *PLEASE* EAT DINNER?" They might have, had Mom not hit so much sauce to realize she left the oven on too long.

After a school lecture from the obligatory bespectacled, white-haired authority figure, Joe tries to find peace at the home of his pal Ruth, but it turns out her dad, too, is fond of after-work slurred speech. The moral we're left with: Continue to let Dad booze up and kill his liver; just don't *you* touch it.

The Baptist-backed *Pay the Piper* takes place on Betty's graduation night, and her father can't wait to give her a shiny new watch. He'll have to wait until the next life, however, as the cops inform her parents that she bought the farm in an auto accident. Betty's dad looks at the watch and breaks down crying. What, didn't you save the receipt?

After the police inform him that alcohol was involved, Betty's dad begins a *Hardcore*-esque investigation to find out who sold his daughter liquor, and he goes around flashing her pic all over town like a badge. At a community meeting he holds at his home, the local pastor spouts this bizarre analogy: "If a giant octopus was threatening my family or community, I'd want to fight that octopus. Now, I'm no octopus expert..."

Whatever. Betty's dad continues his revenge-minded crusade, telling his wife, "I have no reason to go on living." Sounds like he could use a cool one. I won't spoil the surprise ending, but boy, is it *rich!*

In *The Choice Is Yours*, Jerry and Louise go to their chemistry teacher's house for a special lesson. There's good reason he's in chem; as they arrive, he's got an array of fine liqueurs laid out on the table. But he just wants to answers their questions about the devil's drink, like Jerry's inquiry of "Why does it make people do such queer things?" Cue the footage of stumbling drunks and skid-row bums, not to mention the animated film on the human body cutaway being poisoned by alcohol.

Encyclopedia Britannica's *Alcoholism* delves into the case history of one alkie – in this case, Ed. The flick suggests that Ed's problem stems from his childhood, when his coloring skills were deemed not up to snuff by his abusive, undershirt-wearing father. (I offer a more valid theory for driving him to drink: He and his wife

The Little Shop of Horrors

having to sleep in separate beds!)

Finally, there's *None for the Road: Teen-Age Drinking and Driving*, in which Jerry chastizes his friend Dan for ordering ginger ale instead of beer ("What gives?"). Dan explains that's he got the keys to the family car, and he's staying dry. He's so proud of the keys that he's attached them to a his lucky charm, which attracts the eye of a young honey. "Can I trade you for it?" she asks. "Looks to me like you got plenty of charm!" says Dan, who still doesn't get laid.

While we see the ill effects of these pals' decisions to drink, a bespectacled doctor shows how alcohol affects lab rats. The rodents are subjected to a round of Bunsen beaker gymnastics, wherein the drunkest rat falls on his ass time and time again. As if that demonstration wasn't enough, the good doctor shows us what happens when you use a moving automobile and a real, live deliveryman – when you absolutely, positively have to drive a point into the ground.

Open a cool one and kick back with this collection.

Anna Nicole Smith Exposed: Her Fantasies Revealed
(1998)
Fantasy Home Video
★★★★☆

Following her *Playboy* days, billionaire wedding and many, many Drake's Cakes, Anna Nicole Smith shows us just how far starlets can fall and how pathetic they can really be, in a neo-softcore documentary that is one of the *least* sexy hours on tape, just one notch above that "very special episode" of *The Golden Girls*. If there's anyone who can make sex a turn-off, it's Anna Nicole Smith in what can only be called the Schafer's Honey-Baked Ham era of her career.

Interspersed with demonstrations of Anna's uninspired fantasies are semi-interviews with Anna herself, in which she says things so stupid I don't think she's smart enough to realize how stupid they are. You can tell she's just reading off cue cards, anyway. Serving as a framing device, we see Anna posing for a calendar that never hit the market, probably because there already was one that year featuring cows.

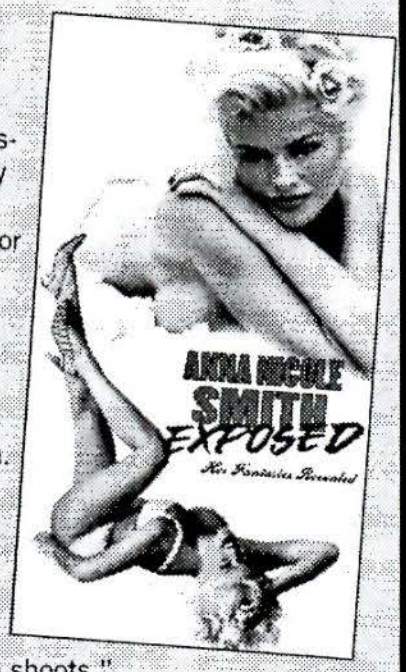
Clearly this is not your early-'90s Anna; her face is all puffy and her once-celebrated breasts look bruised from excessive beatings.

Nevertheless, there are several guys in this video eager to join her for some simulated sex, including Darren, a houseboy who gets his total RDA of calcium from a morning romp with his bloated employer. Also falling prey to her scripted feminine wiles is Jason, a shirtless pastry chef in the kitchen who moves and acts like an animatronic robot on the fritz.

Coming to an end, *Exposed* presents all of Anna's nude scenes from her two starring roles to date, *To the Limit* and *Skyscraper*, thus saving you from having to rent them, although they're even *funnier* than this.

SAY IT AGAIN, HAM
'ANNA NICOLE SMITH EXPOSED: HER FANTASIES REVEALED'

- "Fame's a bitch."
- "Every morning I masturbate. Oh, you know, a refreshing wakeup!"
- "With a body like this, who wouldn't want to masturbate? What a great way to start the day. It's *sooo* relaxing. It prepares me for a grueling day at the studio, not to mention the parties of the night."
- "Darren, wonderful Darren. I pay him a lot to do nothing but please me. ... Oh, and he also has a pretty good butt."
- "It's a lot like masturbating. I guess that's why it's so exhausting. I put *a lot* into those photo shoots."
- "My favorite place to masturbate? *Definitely* the tub. I get the shivers just thinking about it."
- "What about oral sex? There's nothing like it when you get it right."
- "I see Jason *pounding* out some dough on that *hard, cold* marble counter with his bare hands ... I just get *sooo* excited."



The Love Letter
(1999)
DreamWorks Home Video
★☆☆☆☆

Basically, this movie is *Three's Company: The Motion Picture*, but instead of Don Knotts, we get Tom Everett Scott. Kate Capshaw (who is very hot for an 80-year-old) receives a love letter in the mail. But who's it from? Magnum P.I. or the American Werewolf in Paris? Or was it meant for Ellen? (Don't worry; it wasn't.)

To spare you from watching it, Kate's mom is a lesbian who is in love with the village's kooky old lady. At the very end, the letter flies out the window and over the sea. I thought this movie would be funnier if after we see the letter flying over the sea, it cuts to China, where a Chinese girl had found the letter and is reading it. She then says something funny in Chinese. —*LF*

Atomic Scare Films: Vol. 2
(2000)
Something Weird Video
★★★★☆

Atomic Scare Films: Vol. 3
(2000)
Something Weird Video
★★★☆☆

Here are more vintage nuke-themed ditties to watch in the comfort of your own reinforced concrete basement. And *Vol. 2* begins with *Pattern for Survival*, narrated by a guy named Chet, who attempts drawing an analogy between nuclear war and some stuffed shirt pushing a crippled kid through a weaponry museum. Enter William Laurence, your average clichéd journalist (chain-smoking as he hunt-and-pecks) who says, "I saw it with my own eyes!" in much the same way your crotchety old neighbor ordered, "You kids get outta my yard!"

Clearly reading off note cards, Laurence spouts off about the "psychological terror weapon" as we get a simple science cartoon on Atom Splitting 101. The short paints an unusually happy face on the prospect of Armageddon – so long as you have a cellar packed with raisins, chocolate bars and Lava soap, you'll be okay! Oh, and simply cover your eyes upon impact. Then before you know it, as the final shot allows, you'll be back enjoying corndogs in no time.

Its polar opposite is *One World or None*, which goes so far as to animate little skulls in the various nuclear blasts as NYC is decimated in cute cartoon fashion. Real footage includes Hiroshima kids sporting their trendy new "heat blast" hairdos.

Operation Q puts a home-ec spin on the horror, with June hanging around Civil Defense as they test how things might be affected by an atomic blast. The guys build houses and stuff them with mannequins, only to tear them to shreds with a nuclear test. She's more inter-

ested in the canned foods, though. With her lackadaisical narration, I half-expected her to say, "I dreamed I toured a nuclear testing grounds in my Maidenform bra!"

Should the bomb drop, at least your communications system in Syracuse will be A-OK, so goes the message of *And a Voice Shall Be Heard!* It's a kick to see citizens scatter at the sound of a warning siren, especially the guy at the barber shop getting a shave. Moral of the story: Two-way radio *rules!*

According to the animation in *The Medical Aspects of Nuclear Radiation*, the human body is run by dwarves wearing funny hats – a prospect that bothers me as much as the threat of nuclear war. Equally disturbing is the demonstration of gamma rays entering the body, because they look like mean tapeworms. The narrator says that "extensive use of atomic energy might eventually result in an overabundance of freaks, suitable for sideshows."

Following are a load of shelter survival tips, where a routine world of chopped ham and saltines awaits! Then it's on to *Shock: Medical Self-Help Training*, which aims to shock on its own with opening narration like, "This is a dead man. This man may die. She, too, may die." The short gets graphic with shots of a woman's hemorrhaging arm and burns, and you get to see some old coot vomit.

Lastly, there's *Infant & Child Care*, in which an ugly suburban housewife whose breasts you *really* don't want to see pops out an udder, swabs it clean and lets her baby starts to suck. The narrator notes that preemies often look "like wrinkled old men" and then advocates giving boiled water to newborns. *AAAAAAAAIIIIIIII-EEEEEEEE!!!!!*

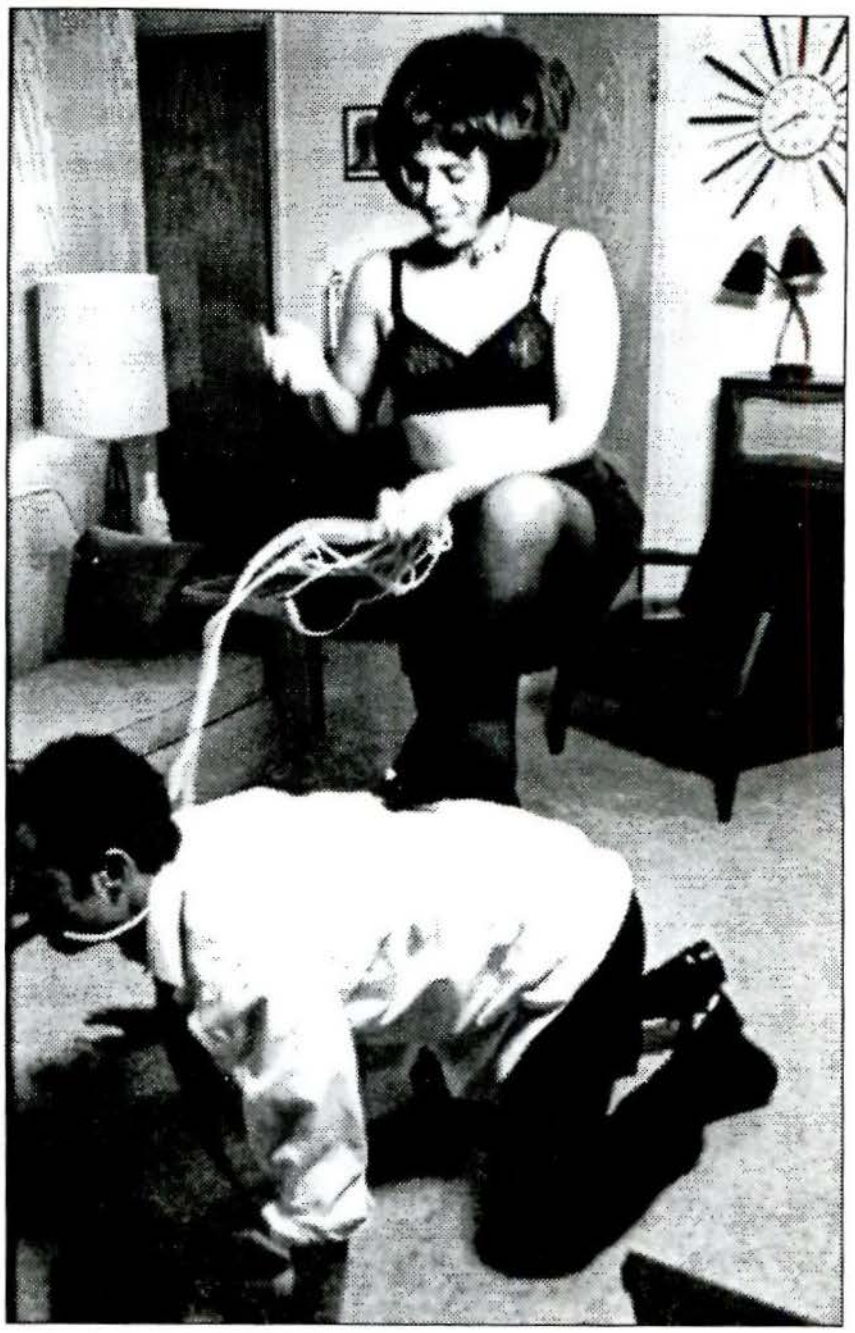
Volume 3 kicks off with *Fallout and Agriculture*, illustrated with a plethora of Crayola drawings. Against a painted farmhouse background, our host gives the straight dope to Old MacDonald, like what happens when Bessie gets bombarded with gamma rays, and why a little Strontium 90 in your bacon and eggs is not a good thing.

The Navy-backed *Industrial Radiological Decontamination of Ships* details step by step the process for approaching, surveying and cleaning a tainted naval vessel. If only the cast of *Virus* had seen this, we'd have been spared that cinematic monstrosity.

The Medical Effects of the Atomic Bomb is wonderfully tacky enough to do an amateurish re-enactment of Hiroshima at ground zero, with inserts of generic disaster footage, while *Medical Services in Atomic Disaster* features more explosions than the Tommy Lee & Pamela tape, and more mass destruction than a weekend at their house.

Watching Encyclopedia Britannica's *The Atom and Agriculture* is like passing by a car accident – you simply cannot divert your eyes from the carnage! There's mutant corn, anemic cows and nerd-o chemists forcing radioactive phosphorous down a hen's throat. It may all be in the name of science, but don't tell me they don't get a sadistic kick of it, too.

Finally, there's *Occupying a Public Shelter*, which covers a lot of the shelter-survival tips from *Volume 2*, but with more paperwork, hard labor, group calisthenics, an all-child rendition of "Frere Jacques" and, thankfully, no saggy, middle-aged librarian titties.



***Yowsa! Alison Faith Levy ties up Miles Montalbano in* Swingers' Serenade.**

Swingers' Serenade
(1999)
Danny Plotnick
★★★★☆

A short film in black-and-white and shot on 16mm, *Swingers' Serenade* is a nice chunk o' retro-swank. Written and directed by underground filmmaker Danny Plotnick, it puts to use a scintillating script from a '60s home-movie magazine, resulting in, as our host puts it, "a tawdry tale of suburban sexual malaise!"

A wife bids farewell to her loving husband as he's off to the daily grind of corporate life. Not long after he leaves, an exotic-looking brush salesman comes to her door. She invites him in and begins flirting, playfully stroking his egg beater. Pretty soon, he's putting clothespins on her nipples and riding her like a horse as he spanks her behind with a wooden spoon.

Then the husband comes home and catches them in the act. In a twist, the woman is murdered ... but by whom?

Though these segments are shot silent, they're more than ably backed up by a great score by The Snugglers. Bridging the tale are bits of commentary by "The Professor," played by Chris Enright, whose delivery is hilarious.

Overall, it may be a few minutes too long, but I love how it accurately captured the look of the times with a tonuge-in-cheek, subversive and perverse flavor.

Galaxy Quest
(1999)
DreamWorks Home Video
★★★☆☆

Trekkies
(1999)
Paramount Home Video
★★★☆☆

I never thought I'd laugh with a Tim Allen movie (as opposed to laughing *at* it), but *Galaxy Quest* is pretty good, despite his presence. In general, I don't think he's funny and it's hard for me to look past his heavily pockmarked monkey-head.

He stars as the Shatner-esque leading man of a long-canceled but highly worshipped sci-fi TV show. Decades later, the cast still shows up for con-

vention appearances, even though they hate each other and abhor the show. An alien race from outer space picks up the reruns, thinks they're real and beams the "crew" up when they're under attack by a villainous horde of reptilian scum.

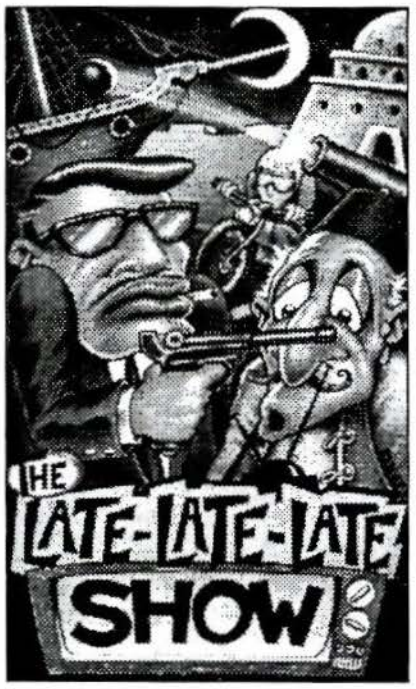
The humor jumps from clever to slapsticky, but it's enough to keep you from being bored. Plus, Sigourney Weaver looks great as a blonde. Much light is made at the expense of the show's cult, which rightfully provides the flick with its best jokes.

You'd think a documentary on *Star Trek* geeks would provide nothing but such laughs. *Trekkies* partially delivers, but it also can be downright sad. It follows several different *Trek* fanatics as they go about their day-to-day "lives." There's a dentist whose entire practice thrives on a *Trek* theme. There's a woman who got kicked off jury duty for wearing her *Trek* uniform. Most pathetic of all, there's a teenage kid named Jordan whose sole purpose in life seems to be providing his peers with numerous reasons to beat him up.

Jordan obsesses over a uniform a friend has made for him, seems positively psychotic as he attends a convention and goes bonkers when his interview with Denise Crosby is interrupted by a phone call. The kid has such little grasp on reality that it's something you just have to see.

The Late Late Late Show: Volume 1
(1996)
Something Weird Video
★★★★★

I wish my local stations were hip enough to show *Operation Gold Ingot* or *Agent of Doom* in the wee hours of the morn. But nope – instead, we get *Vice Versa* and reruns of *Matlock*. Luckily, Something Weird has compiled a load of trailers for these obscure European B-movies of the '60s. How obscure, you ask? For one thing, Fernando Lamas and Curt Jergens are the biggest names here, unless Spiros Focas is a proven draw in your



household.

The film genres represented on *The Late Late Late Show* range from crime and espionage to jungle and adventure. Despite the disparate subject matter, all these B&W coming attractions feature luscious honeys, bad dubbing, swinging soundtracks, disjointed scenes and a narrator who must have been required by law to repeat the film's title no less than half a dozen times. And more often than not, they feature more rounds fired than any given day at your average American public school.

Among the highlights:

• *Danger in the Middle East*'s female lead delivers "a magnificent performance – moving and pathetic!"

• The announcer promises *To Catch a Spy* "Soon, yes, soon! Very soon on this screen!"

• In *X-Ray of a Killer*, a good guy deadpans, "When I say we found the weapon, I mean for certain we know the make. It was a Beretta – such a pretty name for a lethal weapon."

• Pledges the soft-sell narrator, *Wall of Fear* is "a war film that's different."

• We're told *Killer Spy* is "one of the most exciting spy stories ever brought to the screen!" This proclamation follows a clip of our hero falling butt-first into a bucket of water.

• *Prisoner of the Jungle* is "as fresh as invigorating as this mountain stream!"

• *Messalina* assures the viewer of possessing all the elements of a successful film: "Action that builds with suspense, humor that relieves tension and pagan rebels!"

• If you don't think *Sea Fighters* is the be-all, end-all film in cinema history, the announcer would like to tell you differently: "More fast and furious movement than you've ever seen or will ever see again! A film where you don't even dare to blink one eye or you'll miss something you'll wish you hadn't! A film of boisterous humor, human pathos and boiling anger! This is a film that goes everywhere and does everything!"

And after all that sell, the collection closes with a "suspense short" from 1952 entitled *The Gentleman in Room 6*. This is a first-person, surreal exercise with a shock ending. It shocks not because it's clever, but because you'll left with "What the *fuck* was *that* all about?" Still, you don't even dare to blink one eye or you'll miss something you'll wish you hadn't.

Gladiator
(2000)
DreamWorks Home Video
★★☆☆☆

I know I'm in the minority here, but I was vastly underwhelmed by *Gladiator*, Ridley Scott's Roman Empire epic. Russell Crowe stars as Maximus, a valiant soldier whose world comes crashing down when his family is killed, he loses his job and is forced into slavery, where he is to fight really mean tigers and unshaven brutes.

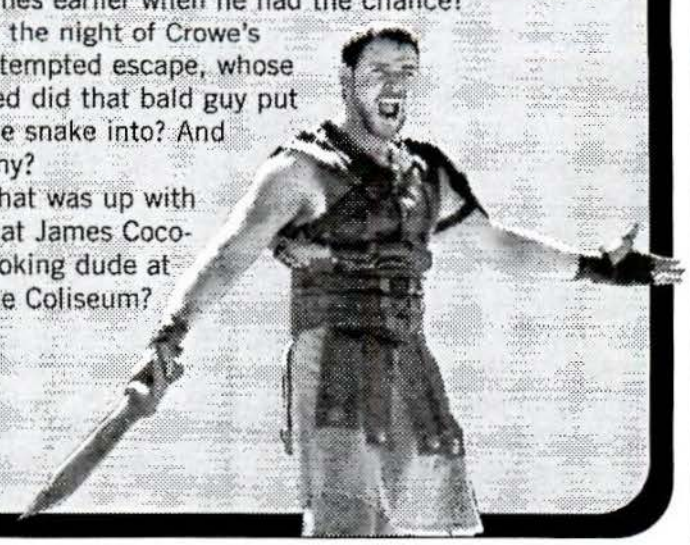
For much of the movie, it goes like this: Crowe broods, doesn't smile and kills a tiger. For my money, he doesn't kill *enough* tigers. The creepy Joaquin Phoenix shows up every now and then to simper, pout his lips and speak with a prissy accent. Like *Braveheart*, I kept waiting for it to pick up and take flight, but it never did. Also like *Braveheart*, without the battle scenes, it would be a total bore.

Sounds and Motion: Vol. 1
(2000)
Palm Pictures
★★★★★

If you like electronic music and have a DVD player, by all means hook up with this cool collection of videos, in the sharpest picture and sound you're ever going to get. Though some really stand out, there's not a dud among them. Fatboy Slim, Underworld, Photek, The Crystal Method are among the several artists represented with cutting-edge cuts. Pure eye candy.

BURNING QUESTIONS
'GLADIATOR'

1. If Russell Crowe didn't want to fight and would rather die, why did he start fighting when he first got thrown into the ring?
2. Why didn't Crowe kill Joaquin Phoenix several times earlier when he had the chance?
3. At the night of Crowe's attempted escape, whose bed did that bald guy put the snake into? And why?
4. What was up with that James Coco-looking dude at the Coliseum?



Edgar Allan Poe's Legend of Horror (1966)
Something Weird Video
★★★★★

Just about as much Edgar Allan Poe's as some scoutmaster spinning tales around a campfire, the Argentine/American oddity *Legend of Horror* throws the young Pierre – with Elvis sideburns – into a dank prison cell with the wacky-ass, hygiene-neglecting Sidney. This Sidney fellow cackles like a hobo on ripple and has forged an unhealthy friendship with a mouse, predating *The Green Mile* by a good three decades.

As the two cellmates plot their escape, Sidney entertains Pierre with a story about how ended up in this good-for-nuthin' place. Switch to a "flashback" (really a dubbed, sizable chunk of another movie altogether, *Master of Horror*) in which a then-strapping Sidney visits his uncle, a clock salesman with a bad eye and a piss-poor attitude toward customer service.

In due time, Uncle Freaky-Eye pushes Sidney to the breaking point, whereupon young Sid smothers the bastard with a pillow. As the cops interview him regarding his uncle's disappearance, Sidney is driven to a confession by hearing the heartbeat of the corpse. (All ties to Poe begin and end in that one scene.)

Jump back to our prisoners, who have busted out of the joint and seek refuge. Sidney kills a couple of guards who come after them, but to the delight of the audience, does so via the magic of "Magicmation" – a fancy cinematic term for "stop-motion!" At the end, all the people Sidney has killed come back to life and cause him to be impaled in a graveyard. For no discernible reason, the film abruptly ditches the B&W for a splash o' color. Never you mind – it just makes it that much more of a hoot.

Stir of Echoes (1999)
Artisan Home Entertainment
★★★★☆

I put off seeing this one over and over (largely due to its terrible title), but I'm glad I finally did. Like *The Sixth Sense*, it's about a kid who's got a gift for communicating with the dead. But it's sooo much better.

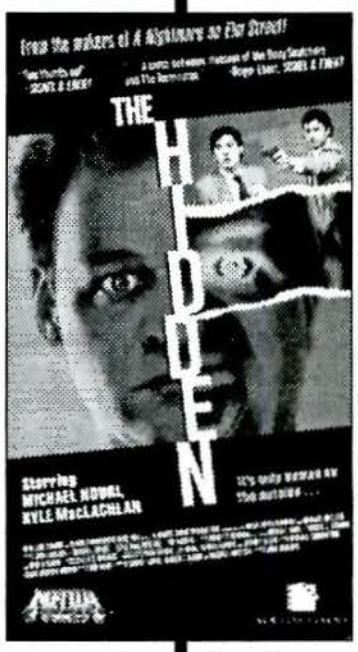
Writer/director David Koepp (whose *The Trigger Effect* also was underseen and underrated) chooses not to focus on the child, but his father (a great Kevin Bacon), a blue-collar Everyman who finds his life turned upside-down by haunting hallucinations after being hypnotized at a party. As the episodes grow stronger, more violent and more frequent, everyone around him begins to wonder if he's not just losing his mind.

There may not be a gimmicky twist ending, but the suspense builds and builds to a climax that I wasn't expecting. Koepp's direction is pretty stylish, relying more on the psychological than the physical to shock and creep. It's too bad this had to follow *Sixth* to theaters, because this one never drags. Granted, it's not worthy of a Best Picture nomination, but neither was *Sixth*.

The Hidden (1987)
New Line Home Video
★★★☆☆

Kind of an update on *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, Jack Sholder's *The Hidden* was a B-movie that became a sleeper hit upon its release. Though it doesn't hold up all that well, it still takes an overused premise and makes it work.

A slimy alien bug moves from human host to human host, causing them to lose all reason and go on crime sprees – robbing banks, stealing Ferraris, mowing down invalids in wheelchairs – y'know, the usual. Kyle MacLachlan is a FBI agent (no, not *that* FBI agent) with a mysterious background who teams with local supercop Michael Nouri (*Flashdance*, flash-in-the-pan) to find the extraterrestrial glob before it does any more damage.



The kick of *The Hidden* comes from watching law-abiding citizens (including Claudia Christian as a stripper) turn downright nasty. The special effects of the alien transfer from one person to another via the mouth are pretty gross and thus, don't hurt one's enjoyment, either.

Sholder has never made a movie better than this one (*A Nightmare on Elm Street 2* and *Wishmaster 2* grace his spotty CV), and he enlivens what probably otherwise would have been a tired, routine genre effort (like, say, the terrible, unrelated sequel). But he packed it with a little too much god-awful '80s hair rock to give it much of an afterlife. Having hard-ass Nouri as one of your two leads helps date it considerably, too.

Dinosaur (2000)
Walt Disney Home Video
★★☆☆☆

It may be a feast for the eyes, but *Dinosaur* just offers scraps in the story department. A prehistoric kiddie film with computer-animated characters against live-action backgrounds, *Dinosaur* wants to push the envelope. The plot is as slow and lumbering as the giant beasts it features, however, which nearly renders it extinct.

Essentially, the first act is last year's *Tarzan* all over again, plus a pee-pee joke. A baby dinosaur is born out of his element and quickly adopted by a family outside his own species. The mother and children love him; the father shuns him until he can prove his worth. (And is it just me, or do you think Ossie Davis and Alfre Woodard raised a fuss when they were told, "We'd like you to voice the monkeys.")

Then just when things are peachy, big meteors falls from the sky (yes!), forcing our dinos to move to a new home. And so they walk and they walk and (yawn) they walk. And of course they find one, and there's a musical number and it's over. Had Disney had the balls to have *all* the dinosaurs die in one huge fireball as history tells us most certainly happened, this puppy would've been given five stars, just for warping the minds of kids nationwide.

Why sugarcoat it?

Mission: Impossible 2 (2000)
Paramount Home Video
★★★☆☆

With a film as widely derided as 1996's *Mission: Impossible*, you'd think it would be highly possible to improve upon the original, but that's not the case. It may be far more coherent, but it lacks the original's energy (at least for a while).

Reprising his role as superspy Ethan Hunt, Tom Cruise looks as though he's forever auditioning for a shampoo commercial. If he were in a James Bond film, it'd have to be called either *The Man with the Golden ConAir Dryer* or *The Spy Who Loved Himself*. I can only take so much of Cruise's winks at the camera and penchant for showing off, and the needle on this one goes over the limit.

Here, after a risky rock-climbing vacation, IMF informs him to recruit a comely cat burglar (Thandie Newton, who looks like Paula Abdul minus 40 lbs.)

for a job. After a second-meeting screw, Hunt finds out he is to use her as bait to get to her ex-boyfriend (Dougray Scott), a diabolical sort with a funny accent and a killer virus.

This setup takes far too long, and as a result, the first hour or so is dreadfully slow and dull. But whereas the first half is a love story, the second half is testosterone-slingin' action, and since John Woo is in the director's chair, this part does not disappoint. Woo delivers exactly what you'd expect: high-octane chases, beautifully orchestrated martial arts match-ups and, just to show you he hasn't totally abandoned HK cinema, slo-mo shots of pigeons.

Oh, if only the first half would have been this good, this sequel would have kicked ass left and right. Maybe *M:I3* – and don't you think there *won't* be one. Some suggestions for that one: Lighten up! And get a haircut!

Leprechaun: Lep in the Hood (2000)
Trimark Home Entertainment
★★★★☆

If you thought the *Leprechaun* series ran out of ideas with *Leprechaun 4: Leprechaun in Space*, you thought way too soon. Like a cross between *Boyz N the Hood* and ... well, *Leprechaun*, this installment starts off in the 1970s, where a beafro'ed Ice-T is looking for gold in the sewers of Compton. He somehow happens upon the original rapper himself, the Leprechaun. Ice accidentally frees him, then casts his green ass back into stone.

Flash forward to 1999. Still Compton, only now instead of disco, all the kids like the gangsta rap – that is, except for our story's three heroes: Postmaster P, Stray Bullet and Butch. You see, while other rappers are getting record contracts for singing about cappin' punks and smacking ho's, the boys want to "keep it on the positive tip." Enter Ice-T, who – because of a magic flute he stole from the Leprechaun (whom he keeps encased behind glass in his office) – is now the biggest gangsta rap producer in the world. Bigger than Puff, yo! The boys audition for him and fail miserably, so they come back late that night to rob Ice-T of his gold, only the Iceman ain't havin' none of that! They accidentally let the Leprechaun loose from his case and wackiness ensues. Get ready to shamrock and roll!

Scenes that will stand out in your mind for weeks will be the scene where Ice-T and the Leprechaun smoke a fat blunt in a men's room and when a transvestite has dirty, Blarney stone-kissin' sex with the Leprechaun. Add the bonus of the Leprechaun's flygirl zombies from hell and these boys are in for some trouble!

One more thing: Remember how in the late '80s, every horror film released had a rap song about the evil character play during the end credits? Well, *Leprechaun 5* resurrects that tradition, and I say it's about damn time! The Leprechaun (along with the aforementioned flygirl zombies) perform the rap "Lep in the Hood Here to Do No Good." Who knew the Leprechaun was down wit' DMX?

—LF

Gone in 60 Seconds (2000)
Touchstone Home Video
★★★☆☆

This one has the Jerry Bruckheimer formula down pat: *Way* too many characters, an illogical screenplay, unrealistic stunts that thumb their collective nose at the laws of physics, virtually no women, lots of mood lighting, lots more stupid dialogue and the fastest edits known to man.

And of course, it's also kinda fun.

In a remake of a '70s cult classic (although I've yet to meet anyone who is part of that cult, much less seen it), Nicolas Cage is a retired car thief lured back into the criminal world in order to save his greasy brother, played by Giovanni Ribisi. I'm told Angelina Jolie is in it, too, as Cage's love interest, but I can't verify that. In the standard "old fart" role, Robert Duvall shows up long enough to say, "Check, please!"

Together, they must all steal 50 cars in one night or Ribisi will be flattened like a pancake. So they do. I mean, was there ever any question?

BURNING QUESTIONS
'GONE IN 60 SECONDS'

1. How did Nicolas Cage know that big chain just *happened* to be handy and nearby at the diner?
2. So after Nicolas Cage jumps the tow truck on the otherwise blocked bridge, how do the cops get by?
3. Whatever happened to Timothy Olyphant's character? We see him get shot – then what?
4. Wouldn't the bad guy hear Nicolas Cage's footsteps as he runs across the metal floor to knock the gun out of his hands?
5. For what reason did Angelina Jolie have dreadlocks? And could she *be* any creepier?

The Erotic Witch Project (2000)
EI Cinema
★★★☆☆

While *The Blair Witch Project* was by no means the horror masterwork as it was touted, it still had potential to be a good film. Obviously, the makers of *The Erotic Witch Project* saw this potential, too, and decided to run with it, adding the essential elements needed in any great film: gigantic, silicone-enhanced breasts and an on-the-loose ape.

Following the same basic plot of *Blair Witch*, three horse-faced hotties decide to go out to a remote wooded area to debunk the myth of the "Erotic Witch" for their sexuality class. They head off, even with news that an ape has escaped into the woods. The three bicker argue and lose their map. Pretty much the same so far, right?

Soon, the girls start hearing the orgasmic howl of the witch and begin to perform many, many sexual acts, both solo and with each other – one even using a twig! These scenes are never really "hot," mostly because of all the stretch marks and pimples on the actresses' asses. Also, they seem really forced and fake. The girls just don't seem to really enjoy being exploited in a film that is just above porno like many others do.

They wake up in the morning and find dildoes and an inflatable woman strewn all about the camp. Then, the ape finds their camera and watches them get it on. I think he masturbates, too, but it is implied and not shown. Not that I really want to see it anyway.

Blair's nonexistent chills, production values and dialogue are mimicked perfectly, but this is the better movie, which is really not saying much. *—LF*

Fortress 2: Re-Entry (1999)
Columbia/Tristar Home Video
★★★★☆

A sequel to one of only three good movies starring Christopher Lambert (and no, geeks, *Highlander* isn't one of

them), *Fortress 2: Re-Entry* really should be called *Fortress 2: Re-Exit*, right? After all, it's the escape that's the thing.

In the near future, giving birth is still a felony punishable by life sentences. Lambert's character, having survived the first film, is now reunited with his family and living in the wilderness until the bad guys find and arrest him.

The futuristic prison fortress he's taken to, however, looks totally unlike the sleek, state-of-the-art facility of the first film, presumably due to a low budget. Similarly, this sequel retains only a fraction of the original's cleverness and wit – a trade-off I'd expect when you go from a director like Stuart Gordon to the guy who helmed *Young Guns II*. Comeback now officially over I guess, Pam Grier has a senseless supporting role as the corporate owner of the prison.

The third act may be silly and convoluted, but there's some decent airlock action, camera-equipped cockroaches and numerous shower scenes to compensate. Lambert hams it up as usual, though his voice hardly raises above a whisper. "Why's he talk like that?" my wife asked.

"Because he's French and he's not a good actor," I answered. I mean, the guy may have a grasp on the English language, but his palms are still greased with Vaseline.

Titanic 2000
(2000)
El Cinema

★★☆☆☆

Take the best fart jokes Troma has to offer, the erotic sensibilities of any Surrender Cinema release and the CGI-knowledge of a 5th-grader in Mrs. Delvecki's keyboarding class and you have *Titanic 2000*, with emphasis on the *Tit*.

The Titanic has been rebuilt and is about to set off for its second maiden voyage – only this time it's called the "TIT-anic," I guess because lots of breasts – or "tits," as they are sometimes called – are seen a few times. On board are the typical gay stereotypes; the fat woman who eats a lot; the guys who farts a lot; a rock singer with a bad, overdone British accent; and a bunch of sluts who disrobe many, many times. The comparisons to James Cameron's Oscar-winning *Titanic* end there, though, because also included is a vampire lesbian who needs to find a new bride. The new bride in question is the very hot Tina Krause, 100 times more attractive and a little more slutty than Kate Winslet.

The characters run around a lot, fart, show breasts, do pratfalls, eat and fart.

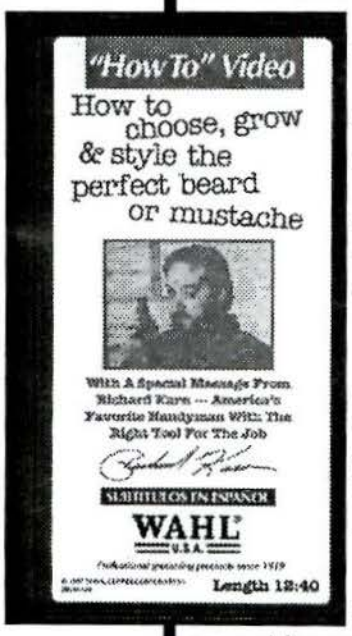
The Titanic sinks in the end, not due to an iceberg, but because the hull was made of tinfoil. Tina and the vampire swim through many badly done blue screens and escape. In the water, their breasts float. They then go to Long Island (?) and have more lesbian sex. —*LF*

How to Choose, Grow & Style the Perfect Beard or Mustache
(1996)
Wahl Clipper Corporation

★★☆☆☆

This tape is about welding and soldering. *Ha!* I kid. As the title suggests, it's about big bushy beards and mustaches.

It looks like you're in for wacky pratfalls galore as some poor schmoe gets water sprayed in his face in his own bathroom, and *Home Improvement* sidekick Richard Karn bursts in without knocking to save the day with a Wahl clipper! But these shenanigans last about 30 seconds, and Karn disappears in favor of an elongated facial hair lesson subtitled in Spanish. It's kinda like back in junior high when you'd go to a free pizza party, and after you ate, some people would give you a lecture on Jesus.


"How To" Video
How to choose, grow & style the perfect beard or mustache
With A Special Message From Richard Karn — America's Favorite Handyman With The Right Tool For The Job
SUBTITLES IN ESPANOL
WAHL
U.S.A.
Length 12:40

The "how-to" here is accompanied by image after image of thick-necked Bigfoot-type guys trimming their beards. One sleazeball with a bolo looks like he works the evening shift at Radio Shack. One fat guy with a scraggly, multi-colored beard is combing it out, and I swore he was going to find bits of stew.

Then some "Draw Tippy!"-type illustrations demonstrate how a mustache and/or beard can enhance the faces of various effeminate males. You can play this game at home with one of those dime-store magnetic-dust face toys.

The narrator said something about "will not leave a gummy residue," which did nothing to allay my fears.

5 PLAYGIRLS WALKED INNOCENTLY INTO HIS ARMS
...only to meet the devil in the flesh!
An unusual story of strange love and desire
NOT RECOMMENDED FOR CHILDREN
"THE Playgirls AND THE Vampire"
She knew... when she felt his lips on her, that there was no other man for her... if this was a man!
ALL NEW!
A Richard Gordon Presentation
A Fanfare Films Release

The Playgirls and the Vampire
(1960)
Something Weird Video

★★★★☆

Bearing more than a passing resemblance to the Mickey-Hargitay-goes-bonkers B-fave *Bloody Pit of Horror*, the Italian erotic horror number *The Playgirls and the Vampire* plunks five easy-on-the-eye dancers and their Norman Fell-like chaperone in a spooky castle during inclement weather.

The castle's host, Count Kernassy, is all-too-willing to have these lovelies shack up at his place for the night, but warns them not to leave their rooms under any circumstances. Doing as women do, though, one ignores this piece of advice and gets bitten by a vampire. The next night, she's an official member of the undead, walking around in her birthday suit and sporting sharp new teeth.

With not much too do, the four remaining gals practice their dance steps, but each in a different style, reminding one of the rehearsal scene in the Charlie Brown Christmas special. One chick decides to break out in an impromptu striptease. You'd think their goofball manager might take advantage of his position, but he's perfectly happy sleeping next to a girlie magazine that he props up on a pillow and calls "Sweetheart."

In the underground-catacombs climax, the Count and

the vampire duke it out, with the vamp getting impaled on a conveniently wall-mounted spear. Via the magic of cheap animation, he degenerates into a skeleton in the film's coolest scene.

Only a smidgen less talk and a helping more of nekkid vampire chicks could make this obscure B&W tale more fun than it already is.

You and Your Baby (1997)
Lamaze Institute for Family Education
★☆☆☆☆

Aimed at worrisome new mothers-to-be, this video opens with music so precious and cloying, it makes me want to smack a child. Hey, don't worry – as the host says, "babies are remarkably unbreakable."

This tape shows lots of nipples – just not nipples attached to the body of anyone whose nipples you'd want to see. Then they try to sell you products from Ivory and Playskool, but doggoneit if I ain't hankerin' for dairy.

Amazon Women on the Moon (1986)
MCA/Universal Home Video
★★★★★

Sort of a sequel to John Landis' *Kentucky Fried Movie*, the schizophrenic sketch-comedy *Amazon Women on the Moon* is centered around TV parodies. The film was brutally savaged upon its release, but over the years, it has grown quite a following, thanks to video. Having seen it nearly 10 times over the past dozen years, I happen to love it.

The movie is anchored by a dead-on parody of the dime-a-dozen space movies of the 1950s, particularly *Queen of Outer Space*. It's split into about four segments over the course of the film. Equally as clever are the spoofs of the old Universal horror films (*Son of the Invisible Man*, with Ed Begley Jr. wrongly believing his naked self to be invisible) and the VD scare films of the '30s and '40s (*Reckless Youth*, with Carrie Fisher and the recently departed Paul Bartel). You really have to know the source material well to appreciate how good these spoofs are, and that's probably why *Amazon* failed to connect with critics.

Even still, there are so many other choice moments, like Arsenio Hall (in his only good screen moment) screaming, "Look, the bitch don't live here!"; David Alan Grier's glorious, soulless black singer, Don "No Soul" Simmons; Griffin Dunne as an absent-minded doctor misplacing Michelle Pfeiffer's newborn baby; and the marvelous breasts of Corrine Wahl.

Directed by *five* different people – including Landis and Joe Dante – *Amazon Women* is one of those comfortable comedies you can go back to time and time again. If you catch it on cable, all the good naughty parts are taken out, but you get extra sketches that *aren't* on the DVD (what's up wit' dat?). Among them, Dick Miller as a ventriloquist whose dummy is accidentally switched with a French one.

The Mighty Peking Man (1977)
Miramax Home Entertainment
★★★★★

Hong Kong *King Kong!* This Shaw Brothers take on the giant-monkey-gone-ape story is so unintentionally hysterical that even joking about it in print doesn't do it justice.

In a remote jungle, an earthquake – simulated via unbelievably bad rear-screen projection – unleashes a giant gorilla from the mountain. If you're fishing for an explanation as to *why*, *how* or *what* a giant gorilla was doing in the mountain in the first place, forget about it. Just know that he doesn't care much for being out of the mountain, so he steps on a lot of screaming villagers and destroys a lot of obviously miniature miniatures.

The Mighty Peking Man (I'm not sure how he got that name, either, but I'll just call him "Peking" for short) befriends a little girl whose parents' plane crashes in the jungle (or rather, lands pretty gently for a toy model). Thanks to Peking's unparalleled parenting skills, she grows up to be quite the sexpot. Played by Evelyn Kraft, she looks like Farrah Fawcett crossed with a Barbie doll, which is kinda redundant anyway. She wears nothing but an all-too-skimpy loincloth and (inexplicably) makeup. She communicates only through primitive words and grunts, but since she's not shy at showing her ass, the guys who meet her don't care.

Specifically, I speak of the Hong Kong guy with the worst case of helmet hair in the country. He's sent out by some organization to find this Peking man, who is reputed to be mighty. He does, along with the quasi-Sheena, and he mates with her in no time, making Peking jealous when he catches them mid-coitus. But do you *really want* to be copulating with a woman who's lived in the jungle and doesn't have access to all the fine hygiene products we take for granted?

The new lovebirds celebrate their language-impaired coupling by taking part in a syrupy, slow-motion montage, in which they twirl tigers draped across their backs and run across the sun-bathed fields, so that Evelyn's nipples can slip in and out of her costume and preserved for historical posterity by the camera's CU.

Then they chain Peking to a large boat and take him to Hong Kong, where they will reap riches by showcasing him in a variety of games in a stadium setting, like a monster truck pull – *literally*, a monster truck pull, as Peking *is* a monster and he is shown yanking on several trucks chained to him.

This pisses Peking off (not to mention the abuse and prodding with sticks), so he escapes and goes loco in downtown Hong Kong, ultimately climbing atop a tall building so that – having seen the two American *King Kong* movies in which Kong ultimately climbs atop a tall building and falls to his death – the viewer knows *exactly* what will happen.

And it does, but does so in such a laughably cheap 'n' shoddy technique to stay within the context of this incredibly goofy film.

Sleepy Hollow
(1999)
Paramount Home Video
★★★★★

Tim Burton's twisted take on the classic Washington Irving horror tale turns out to be the greatest Hammer movie that Hammer never made. With flawless art direction, Burton creates a unique world that's equal parts Gothic and gore.

Johnny Depp – hilarious in his portrayal of Ichabod Crane as a "girl detective" – is sent to the town of Sleepy Hollow, where three people have been mysteriously beheaded. The townspeople blame the murders on the Headless Horseman, but Crane – sickened by the sight of blood, scared of spiders – doesn't believe such nonsense. Until he witnesses one of the Horseman's expert decapitations firsthand, that is.

This may be the best job Burton has ever done as a director. It overcomes the story problems you usually see in his films, and the material suits him to a T.

Mystery Science Theater 3000: The Brain That Wouldn't Die
(1993)
Rhino Home Video
★★★★☆

Most notable as the first *MST3K* episode sans creator Joel Hodgson, this show finds new guinea pig Mike Nelson beginning his five-year run on the Satellite of Love. For his inaugural run, he and the 'bots watch the 1959 science shocker *The Brain That Wouldn't Die* (or, if you believe the end credits, *The Head That Wouldn't Die*).

It's about a young, pinheaded neurosurgeon who – through his own brand of blatant stupidity and disregard for the law – kills his girlfriend in a preventable auto accident. Well, *almost* kills. Her head is still alive, which is puts in a pan down in the basement of his summer home.

He spends the rest of the movie scouting both streets and strip clubs for the perfect body onto which he can graft his girl's disembodied head. Meanwhile, his torsoless gal pal communicates with the mongoloid freak-beast being kept under lock and key in a closet. I swear I'm not making this up!

The *MST3K* gang gets off their usual slew of sarcastic comments, peppered with pop-culture references from the household to the wholly obscure. The funniest line comes when Mike says, "Have you seen *Frankenhooker*?" (trust me, it *kills* when seen within context). I've also never laughed so hard at the utterance of "Hi!" Take my word for it. This is not a classic episode, but merely a great one.

Me, Myself & Irene
(2000)
20th Century Fox Home Entertainment
★★★★★

If you don't laugh and laugh hard at this movie, you may have a problem. This Farrelly brothers effort wasn't as well-received as their last, *There's Something about Mary*, but it's really every bit as funny. I mean, what were you expect? Cum on the ear *again*?

You can't count me among the Jim Carrey cult, but there's no one else who could do what he does here as a schizophrenic Rhode Island motorcycle cop whose two halves fall in love with the same woman, Renée Zellweger. To tell you what happens would spoil what are some really funny, tasteless gags, but do look out for what will go down in history as T&A video queen Shannon Whirry's finest screen moment.

X-Men
(2000)
20th Century Fox Home Entertainment
★★★★★

Bryan Singer's adaptation of Marvel Comics' super-team of mutants is an excellent comic-book movie, right up there with the first two *Supermans* and *Batmans*.

Patrick Stewart is Professor X, the wheelchair-bound mind-reader who serves as a surrogate father to America's mutants, providing a home to Cyclops (James Marsden), Dr. Jean Grey (Famke Janssen) and Storm (Halle Berry), each of whom have their own powers.

But the story really belongs to Wolverine (newcomer Hugh Jackman), who has metal claws protrude from his hands whenever he gets angry, which is a lot. He's a wanderer searching for his past when he happens upon the X-Men, and reluctantly joins the team when the life of a young mutant (Anna Paquin) is threatened by Prof. X's old enemy, Magneto (Ian McKellen).

Though the action scenes are terrific, I'm not sure you can call *X-Men* an action movie. Singer is more interested in the relationships between these oddball characters, and spends more time exploring that. The gamble works, taking the material from what could've been a stupid, SFX-for-SFX's sake affair into a nice combo of art and commerce.

Jackman should be a big star after this (and deserves to – he can act!), and there no doubt will be a sequel. The film readies itself for one, leaving many loose ends. Let the countdown begin.

American Movie
(1999)
Columbia/Tristar Home Video
★★★★★

Coven
(1997)
Northwestern Productions
★☆☆☆☆

American Movie is the best documentary I have ever seen, and certainly far funnier than most of what Hollywood passes off as comedies.

For two years, filmmakers Chris Smith and Sarah Price followed Milwaukee sad-sack Mark Borchardt – a broke, high-school dropout with a paper route – on his years-long quest to make a feature film based upon his own experiences as a frustrated, boozed-up writer. Somewhere along the way, gears shift as Mark decides to finish a horror short entitled *Coven* and sell it, in order to raise funds for his dream production.

Though Mark continually chases his vision, almost nothing works in his favor, from financial setbacks and bouts of

SKELETONS IN THE CLOSET
RENÉE ZELLWEGER

Before *Me, Myself & Irene* and *Jerry Maguire*, Renée Zellweger starred as Jenny in 1994's terrifically terrible *Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Next Generation*. She played the shy, nerdy Jenny, a role that required her to wear silly glasses, run, scream and throw flower pots. *Bravo!*

Show me the potting soil!

depression to hysterical on-set mishaps of Ed Wood-ian proportions. Assisting Mark both on- and off-camera is childhood buddy Mike Schank, a teddy bear with a fried brain, wrapped up in a tie-dyed shirt.

You laugh at these guys, but you also grow quickly to genuinely *like* them, too. You can't help it, because they're all too real, and when Mark's situation takes some dark turns, you find yourself getting a bit down, too.

The film ends on a bittersweet note. There are no revelations or triumphs; Mark simply finishes *Coven*, for better or worse.

"Worse" is the obvious answer if you see *Coven* in its entirety, which you can either by ordering it direct or on the *American Movie* DVD. In a word or two, it's just no good. At 30 minutes, it's 27 too long.

Judging from the footage and behind-the-scenes stuff you see in the documentary, you'd expect *Coven* to be a riot, but it's not. As a horror film, it's not scary. As a thriller, it's not suspenseful. As a film, it's barely watchable. I almost feel guilty for knocking it being the fruit of Mark's elongated and painful labor, but it's elongated and painful viewing in itself.

He has a good eye for framing and establishing shots, but this talent does not extend to the typewriter. Nor is he anything of an actor, though his presence in *American Movie* proves he's as energetic and interesting as any real-life personality.

I'll likely never watch *Coven* again, but I've already seen *American Movie* four times this year alone.

Three Kings
(1999)
Warner Home Video
★★★★★

I never thought I'd look forward to George Clooney movies, but when he followed up the criminally neglected *Out of Sight* with this criminally neglected anti-war war movie, I had to reconsider my position. The guy's pickin' 'em better than anyone else in Hollywood right now.

In *Three Kings*, he partners up with Mark Wahlberg, Ice Cube and Spike Jonze at the end of the Gulf War to steal some of Saddam Hussein's gold, hidden in an underground bunker. They know this thanks to a map they found rolled up in the ass of an Iraqi prisoner.

Of course, their foolproof plan is anything but, forcing them to change their priorities along the way. *Three Kings* excels at balancing humor and drama without thoroughly committing to either side. David O. Russell's script and direction are just about perfect, resulting in one of the edgiest studio films in years. Naturally, the studio had no idea what to do with it; you shouldn't miss it.

Moontrap
(1988)
Shapiro Glickenhaus Entertainment
★★★☆☆

A largely unadventurous space adventure, the straight-to-video *Moontrap* casts *Star Trek*'s Walter Koenig (sporting a bad toupee) and *Evil Dead*'s Bruce Campbell (sporting bad judgment) as American astronauts, making a two-man shuttle mission to the moon.

On their way, they encounter an alien ship that houses a deadly force – a "moontrap," if you will – in the form of a big football. Koenig takes a space walk, lovingly strokes the ship and takes the pigskin home.

Down on earth, when no one's looking, the football opens up and a little evil robot emerges, somehow turning himself into a giant robot so he can kill off the old, slow guys in the office.

Back up on the moon again, Koenig and Campbell do some more exploring and find a whole mess of robots. They also find a stranded woman, so that she can take off her shirt.

On the first appearance of the robots, I was reminded of Herbie, the comic-relief on the later *Fantastic Four* cartoons, which can't be a good sign. Furthermore, the movie has the longest, most boring opening I've ever seen. It's a hunk of green cheese.

FREEZE FRAME
'THREE KINGS'

The makers of "Three Kings" used visual distortion and unusual colors in some scenes of this film. They intentionally used these unconventional techniques to enhance the emotional intensity of the story line.

This strange little disclaimer appears just prior to the start of the home video release of *Three Kings*. Translation: "There is nothing wrong with your TV set – you're just a moron and probably should have rented *The Bachelor* instead."

HARRISON 2-YEAR-OLD MOVIE CRITIC

Dinosaur
(2000)
Walt Disney Home Video
★★★★★

We saw *Dinosaur* and a big, big dinosaur came out from behind a tree and chased a little dinosaur and it was scary. And there were monkeys and the baby dinosaur pee-peed on the monkey. Someday we see it again. It was my favorite movie.

Pee-wee's Big Adventure
(1985)
Warner Home Video
★★★★★

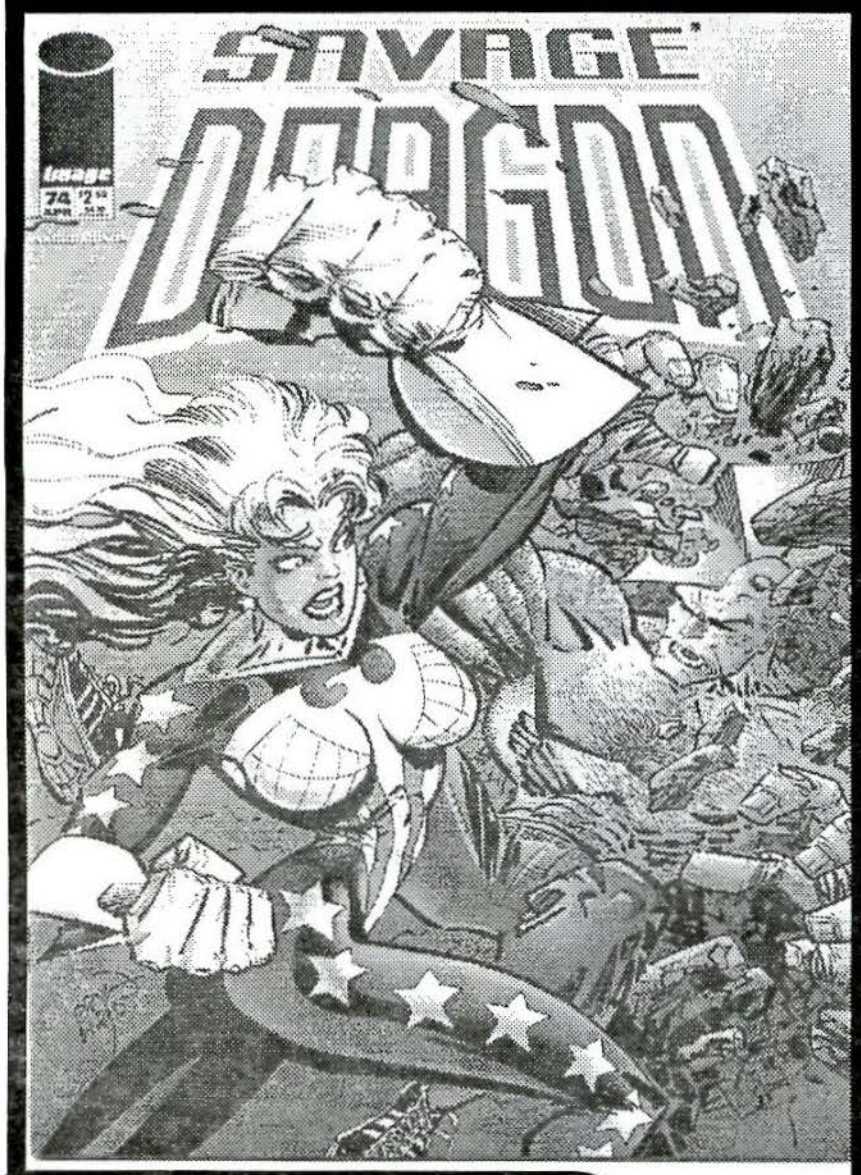
There's Pee-wee and his motorcycle! He's waking up. He's brushing his teeth. He's eating cereal. Oh, a doggie! There's going to be a scary clown. Look, daddy, a scary clown! I don't like scary clown. I don't want to see the scary clown. Who took his motorcycle? Who? Who? Why? Why they take his motorcycle? Oh, my gosh, look, a dinosaur eat his motorcycle! Did you see it? Did you? Why? Why the dinosaur eat his motorcycle? Again, Daddy.

The Mighty Peking Man
(1977)
Miramax Home Entertainment
★★★☆☆

Where's the monkey? That's the monkey? He's a mean monkey! What's he doing? Why's he doing that? Oh, he stepped on him! Is that blood? Why? Why is that blood? Where's the monkey going? Why? Can I watch dinosaurs?

print

edited by Christopher A. Sharpe



guilty pleasure

The Savage Dragon
Written and Illustrated by Erik Larsen
(Image Comics)

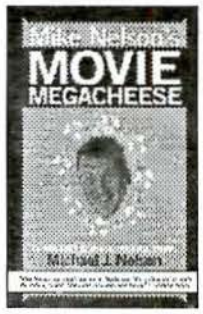
On first glance, this is the last type of comic book that would appeal to me, but after seeing it pop up on several top 10 lists last year, I reluctantly decided to give it a try. I was pleasantly surprised. *The Savage Dragon* recaptures the hyperactive thrill of the superhero comics I read as a child. Everything in it is big. Grotesquely big. Superhumanly *big*. Bit tits. Big muscles. Big sound effects. Big explosions. The main character is a grotesquely muscled green man with a fin on his head. In the issues I have read, he has pummeled the shit out of all kinds of men, women and beasts. He's also been on the receiving end of a blowjob from a spiked reptilian teenager. His daughter has been taken away from him. His girlfriend (who turns into a man when she's a superhero) has been murdered by a Dragon clone. There's also a big-breasted She-Dragon. And a big-breasted She-Dragon clone. At this point in the series, there are so many characters and so much going on, it's a little hard to make heads or tails of the story – but it really doesn't matter. The hyperkinetic action and bizarre sense of humor make *Savage Dragon* the *Evil Dead 2* of comic books and a refreshingly fresh last gasp for superhero comics.

books

Feature Filmmaking at Used-Car Prices (3rd Edition)
By Rick Schmidt
(Penguin Books)

Since the release of its first edition in 1988, *Feature Filmmaking at Used-Car Prices* has become the undisputed bible for aspiring filmmakers. Kevin Smith (*Clerks*) and Eduardo Sanchez (*Blair Witch Project*) have touted the book as being a key factor in the production of their films. The book is a thorough examination of Schmidt's unusual filmmaking process. This is not by-the-book Hollywood-style filmmaking. Smith realizes most of his readers don't have the money to pull off a 70-minute character study, let alone an action-packed thriller. He begins with brainstorming and screenwriting (advocating loose improvisational scripts) to the nuts-and -bolts of lighting, loading a 16 mm camera magazine, editing and promoting your film. The thoroughly revised third edition incorporates digital filmmaking information. This addition makes this update of the book the most exciting yet. The new technology is making the concepts Schmidt has been advocating since the first edition a reality. I can't remember the name of the filmmaker who said that filmmaking wouldn't really become an art form until everyone could afford the tools. With the advent of DV, that day is now upon us and *Feature Filmmaking at Used-Car Prices* is just as important as ever.

Mike Nelson's Movie MegaCheese
By Mike Nelson
(St. Martin's Press)



For a decade, Mike Nelson helped skewer low-budget movies on the late, beloved *Mystery Science Theater 3000*. Now, with his first, post-MST book – *Mike Nelson's Movie MegaCheese*, he aims his formidable sense of humor at Hollywood's big-budget offerings. From *Lost in Space* and *Twister* to *Batman & Robin* and *The Blair Witch Project*, Nelson lets loose with a writing style so funny that it just puts our little rag to shame. Consider these choice nuggets:

READING KICKS ASS!

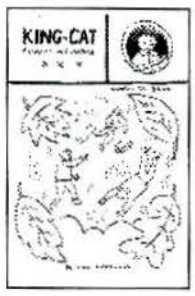
Long-time HITCH readers will remember when we reviewed all kinds of printed material. That ended when Rod got tired of getting crappy zines to review. Now that the "zine movement" has died off and those losers have gone on to making crappy websites, we have decided that it's once again safe to review stuff to read. And as with the other sections, we will review everything we receive. So if you've got something you'd like to get reviewed in HITCH, send it to HITCH Print, P.O. Box 21141, Oklahoma City, OK 73156. (This is only the address for Print.)

• On *Volcano*: "It's not my favorite movie ever (that would be Heartbeeps)."
• On Matt and Kevin Dillon: "He, along with brother Kevin, always excels playing guys who normally ask you what you want on your sandwich at Subway."
• On Val Kilmer: "You don't deserve to be difficult after working with Pat Hingle. Once you've been in a film that featured Kevin Pollack as a squeaky-voiced little fairy, you've forfeited the right to be difficult. Val Kilmer being difficult is like Jaleel White being difficult – he's Urkel; there is no room for difficult."
• On John Travolta in *Broken Arrow*: "It all gives Travolta a chance to overact with a zeal that makes Ron Palillo's Horshack look impossibly dignified and bottomlessly reserved. Even the rock-headed gridiron palooka Howie Long looks like John Houseman next to the histrionics of the gesticulating sweathog."
Hell, even the damned dedication is funny. —*RL*

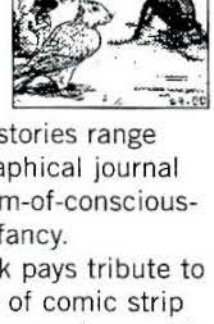
Tabloid Baby
By Burt Kearns
(Celebrity Books)
What in the hell is a "tabloid baby?" It's a term of endearment for an American television journalist who is born again, and then grows up again – professionally and personally – when he moves into the arena of "tabloid TV," the revolutionary, criminal, comical, sex- and guilt-obsessed reality genre that transformed the tube and society throughout the '90s. It's also the title of Burt Kearns' autobiographical story of the same – dubbed by some as *The Front Page* of the new millennium and the *Boogie Nights* of journalism. Both descriptions are pretty apt for this tome, which covers the tabloid craze from its origins to demise, warts and all, from the man who helped make *A Current Affair* the lurid must-see half-hour it was in the late-'80s. *Tabloid Baby* is a vastly entertaining page-turner, seemingly written at the speed of light so as to be read at the speed of light. Plenty of sex, drugs and more sex. —*RL*

comics

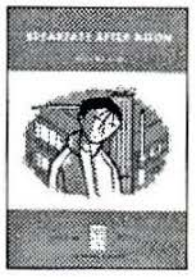
King-Cat #12
By John Porcellino
($2, P.O. Box 881, Elgin, IL 60121)
John Porcellino brings us another beautiful issue of his long-running *King-Cat Comics*. This issue features an issue-length autobiographical story about football, Halloween and growing up. With each issue of *King-Cat*, Porcellino continues to pioneer his uniquely personal storytelling style that is influencing an entire wave of new cartoonists. Porcellino's stripped-down, minimalistic style is simple to the point of almost looking childlike. But the simplicity is deceptive, because John's stories never fail to evoke strong feelings. I can't recommend this highly enough.



Supermonster #12
By Kevin Huizega
($3, P.O. Box 12299, St. Louis, MO 63157)
Kevin Huizenga is one of the most exciting cartoonists working in minicomics today. In each issue of *Supermonster*, he presents an intriguing collection of comic strips, sketches and other graphic elements. The stories range from autobiographical journal entries to stream-of-consciousness flights of fancy. Huizenga's work pays tribute to the rich history of comic strip art while forging a unique and powerful style of his own. The individual pieces in this issue are Huizenga's strongest yet, but also of note is the care he has taken in their arrangement. Huizenga seems to view the booklet format much as a musician would view an album, and has arranged the work accordingly, so that the pieces flow together into a satisfying whole. This is a great series and an exciting opportunity to watch the maturation of a substantial talent.



Breakfast After Noon #1
By Andi Watson
($2.95, Oni Press)
Drag out your Belle and Sebastian CDs and listen to them while you read this sad bastard of a comic. Andi Watson (*Skeleton Key, Geisha*) unleashes his heavenly brushwork on a slice-of-life comic with none of the sci-fi or cosmic elements that have characterized his previous work. The first issue of this series focuses on a young 20-something couple who are laid off from their jobs just as they are making preparations for their wedding. Louis goes on the dole while Rob schemes to get their jobs back. The storytelling is very low-key and full of atmosphere. It's not the stuff of high-drama – but it looks like the start of a great series that will probably be Watson's best work yet.



The Atomics #6
By Mike Allred
($2.95, AAA POP Comics)
Mike Allred is one of those rare artists who has a loyal following among both alternative and superhero comics fans. Allred tells pretty straightforward superhero stories, but injects them with just enough humor and pop-culture references to make them popular with the hipper-than-thou alt-comics crowd. *The Atomics* chronicles the stories of a group of mutant street beatniks who have evolved into a superhero team. Allred's popular Madman is on hand to help them make the transition from decomposing malcontents to cool-looking superheros. While the premise sounds interesting, the execution is rather bland and even somewhat confusing. Some of this probably has to do with the number of characters. In *Madman Comics*, the reader had a singular vantage point with which to experience Allred's world. But with *The Atomics*, there are dozens of characters leaping all over the page and not a single "normal" character in sight. *The Atomics* #6 is a flashback story as we learn the origin of Zapman. The art is beautiful, evoking the energy and inspiration of early Marvel Comics, but the story simply falls flat. In his zeal to bring us his vision of an over-caffeinated pop-culture world gone berzerk, he has neglected to give us anyone or anything to care about.

Blue Monday #1-3
By Chynna Clugston-Major
(Oni Press)
Blue Monday is the best teen movie that I've ever read! This three-issue series focuses on the efforts of high school sophomore Bleu Finnegan to meet her idol Adam Ant. Superbly illustrated in big-eyed, spiky-haired Ameri-manga style, Clugston-Major's characters take on an energetic and animated life of their own. Billed by its publisher as a "teen dramedy," *Blue Monday* offers plenty of laughs but still has plenty of heart. Clugston-Majors never cheapens her characters for the sake of an easy laugh. The comic recalls the best of the John Hughes-style '80s teen movies and reinforces how terrible today's "teen" entertainment really is. *Blue Monday* doesn't attempt to break new artistic ground or push the envelope – it just

tells a great story with lovable characters and outstanding artwork. We *need* more like this!

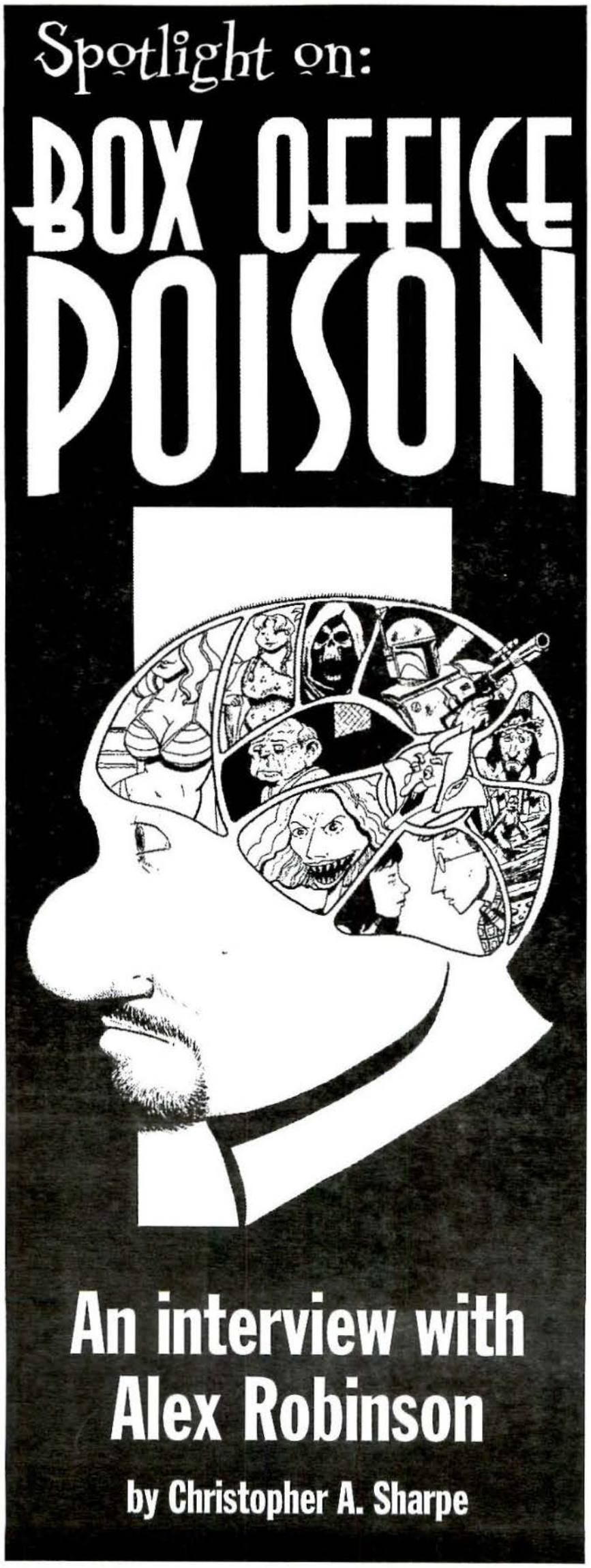
zines

Snapshot #6
By Jeff LeVine
($2, 4956 Kester Ave., Apt #6, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403)

Jeff LeVine is a long-time veteran of the zine and small-press comics scene. With his latest zine, *Snapshot*, the many disparate elements of his previous work have come together and the result is very satisfying. *Snapshot* fuses personal journal writings, poetic comics and sequences of photographs, becoming a very interesting snapshot into his life. It's nicely written, very well designed and very much worth the $2 Jeff is asking for it. Unfortunately, it is the last issue, as Jeff is moving his act to the www. In fact, *Snapshot* #7 is already up on his site *www.lostforlife.com*.

Strayhorn #1 - 2
By Frank Sirk
($2, 316 West 108th St., #3C, NYC, NY 10025)

I first became aware of Sirk's work when I read his massive, tabloid-sized comic book *Storyville*. One of the year's best, the landscapes were particularly outstanding, adding a rich atmosphere that is often lacking in comics. Sirk has continued to indulge his *love for* landscapes with his latest, *Strayhorn*, a collection of handwritten poetic writing with pages and pages of landscapes. Many of the pages look like they have been photocopied directly from Sirk's sketchbooks. Some of the landscapes seem hastily sketched on notebook paper while others are rendered in some kind of grey wash. H



Having graduated from art school, Alex Robinson was determined to break into the comics business. He decided that the best way to do this was by publishing his own mini-comic. Entitled *Box Office Poison*, it was a humorous look at a group of young New Yorkers dealing with everyday issues like roommates, dead-end jobs, sex and *Star Wars* collectibles. Over time, his modestly photocopied zine began to develop a serious buzz within the alternative comics scene.

In 1996, *Poison* was picked up by Antarctic Press and went on to develop a loyal and ever-growing fan base. But as Robinson attracted fans, he also became a punching boy for the comics press, as critics derided the early issues as the comic-book equivalent of a bad television sitcom.

While the early issues had a heavy emphasis on humorous elements, Robinson had a bigger plan for *Poison*. As the series has progressed, Robinson has introduced many more serious plot threads into the mix. Seemingly inconsequential events in early issues have taken on much more serious implications. As Robinson prepares to bring the series to a close, *Poison* is beginning to look less like a sitcom and more like a substantial graphic novel.

HITCH: Since I now know the series ends at #20 or #21, reading through the issues to date took on an entirely different feel. Reading them in one chunk was much more satisfying than reading them individually. Did you always intend for the series to be finite and plan the structure so that the individual issues worked as chapters in a novel?

Robinson: I'm glad it works as a whole. I'm a big fan of trade paperback collections, so I always imagined seeing the story collected in that form someday. I had done about 60 pages of story with the characters (printed in *Box Office Poison* #0) before I hit upon the direction that the story would take. The more I thought about it, however, I realized I couldn't fit it into that small a space. So what was a 40-page story grew into a 600-page story. The series ends with #21 and once I had the story in mind, I knew I would end it somewhere around there.

HITCH: Do you have any plans for the characters beyond #21?

Robinson: Not at the moment. I might have one or two appear in "the next project," but I'm not sure. Issue #21 is mostly set 10 years after the rest of the book, so the characters are very different by that point. If I did use them again, I would maybe focus on one or two of them, rather than the whole bunch. But in any case, I'm looking forward to using different characters.

HITCH: When did you begin the *Poison* mini-comic?

Robinson: I graduated from art school in 1993 and wanted a way to break into alternative comics. I'd heard about a few cartoonists like Chester Brown and Terry LaBan who had done mini-comics, and figured that was as good a way as any.

HITCH: What kind of circulation did you have with it?

Robinson: It's hard to say, because I didn't keep records or anything. I think I was selling about 150, 200 when Antarctic picked up the book.

HITCH: I remember reading positive write-ups in several alternative publications before you started up with Antarctic. I'd assumed you were selling thousands of the mini-comic, because it seemed like everyone in the industry was reading it.

Robinson: I think that's why people – including Antarctic – thought it had better sales than it did. *The Comics Journal* featured me on their "Hit List" and the reviews were pretty good, but the sales didn't reflect that. When I think about it, that's still pretty much the case.

HITCH: Do you recommend the mini-comics path to other cartoonists trying to break in to the "business?"

Robinson: Definitely. First of all, the line between alternative comics and mini-comics nowadays is very thin and blurred. Some minis look just as professional as some "real" comics (and sell about the same). Second, and more importantly, putting together a mini-comic can really wake you up to how much you really want to do comics. If you start a story and find yourself getting bored before the fifth page or it takes you two years to put out a 20-page comic book, you might want to rethink your strategy. Every cartoonist can fill up sketchbook pages with character studies and doodles, but actually putting your ideas into a story takes another kind of discipline. Plus, having your work in one booklet makes it alot easier to show your work around than a bulky portfolio.

HITCH: What prompted your decision to do *Poison* with Antarctic?

Robinson: Everytime I finished a mini-comic – I tried to stick to a quarterly schedule – I would send it off to any publisher I thought might be interested. Antarctic had published the first issue of Ivan Brunetti's terrific *Schizo*, so I sent them some of my comics, and the rest is history. That was in 1996. I'd done 10 mini-comics, and the last seven were the start of the

current *Poison* storyline, so that formed the basis of the first four issues of the AP series.

HITCH: Antarctic isn't really known for publishing alternative, slice-of-life-type comics. Have you been happy with the way they've handled your book?

Robinson: Pretty much. I definitely feel like the black sheep of the family, since my book is so different from the rest of their stuff, but I'm grateful they stuck with the book. Sales were really bad at first, but they were committed to seeing it through. They've also never tried to change the book or interfere, editorially, which is also great. I wish they had promoted it more, but I've never met a cartoonist who thought their book was promoted enough!

HITCH: I know Top Shelf is publishing a big collection of *Poison* is sometime next year. Why isn't Antarctic doing it?

Robinson: Antarctic Press was all set to come out with a second trade paperback when Top Shelf talked to me about doing a big book reprinting the whole series. They made me an offer I couldn't refuse, so I talked to AP and they were cool about it. The big appeal of the Top Shelf deal was that they can get the book into "real" bookstores and the idea of a *Box Office Poison* book on sale at Barnes & Noble was just too ironic to pass up. Top Shelf seems to be very committed to the book. I have a rare feeling of optimism about the whole deal. At this point, I'm not sure what will or won't be included in the book. I hate it when people put a few new pages into a collection, personally. We might not even have room to add things. In any case, it's slated to come out in April 2001. I can say right now that the last issue of *Poison* will have a five-page story that will *not* be in the book.

HITCH: I have to ask it: Were you into superhero comics as a kid?

Robinson: Yeah. I just wrote an article for *collecting-comics.com* about how great John Byrne was when I was 15 or so. I can look at those *Fantastic Four* and *Uncanny X-Men* and vividly remember specific panels and how cool it was to really be into them. I think I stopped reading them by the time I finished high school, having made the natural transition to alternative comics. But I'm always amazed at how many of my "indie" peers grew up with them and would secretly love to try their hand at writing and drawing Spider-Man.

HITCH: I think you would be a perfect writer for Spider-Man.

Robinson: I would love to take a crack at Spider-Man! When I was a teenager, I was a big superhero fan, and the idea of writing those characters is really appealing. Of course, if I were to do *The X-Men*, it would have to be *The X-Men* that I knew. I don't know anything about this Cable guy or Sabretooth or any of these new guys. If I had to pick just one, it would be *Fantastic Four*. John Byrne kicked ass!

HITCH: *Poison* is ending in just a couple of months, but you are planning to do more comics, right?

Robinson: Oh, yes. At this year's Small Press Expo in Bethesda, I should have a mini-comic of "the next project," whatever it is. Comics have been very good to me and – well, pretty good to me, anyway – and I'm in it for the long haul.

HITCH: Will you continue with the humorous slice-of-life thing?

Robinson: Probably, but don't quote me on it. The stories I've been kicking around are mostly slice-of-life-ish. It seems to be what I'm good at. I'm thinking of introducing some more odd elements but it would be basically realistic. I would like to try my hands at other genres – like sci-fi, for example, but I haven't come up with an idea that isn't just watered-down versions of other sci-fi stuff. What I would really love to do is non-fiction stuff, but I don't think I'm ready for it yet. I would really want to do it right and it would take some research.

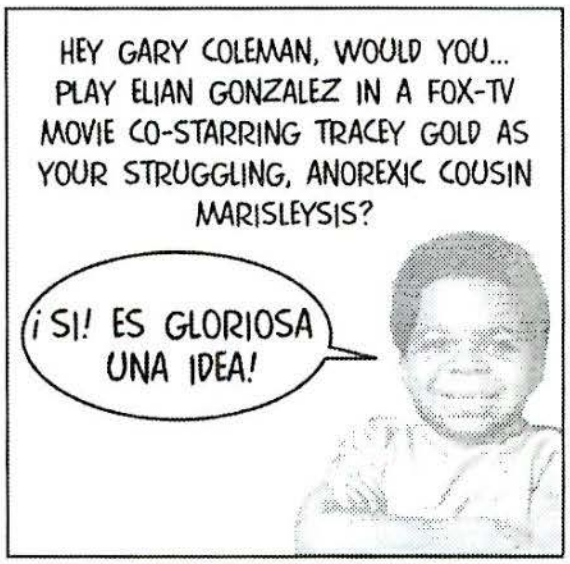
HITCH: Are you doing comics full-time now?

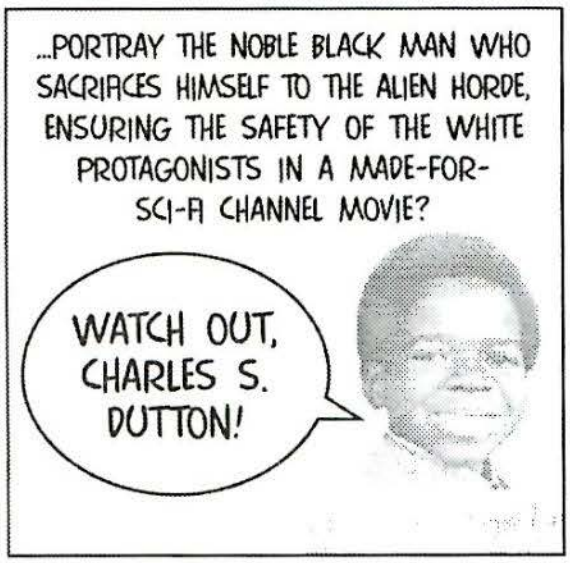
Robinson: I'm not working retail anymore, but I've taken on some other jobs. I did some word processing, I worked as an usher. I've started doing some commercial illustration, which is a revelation: Once you get out of comics, you can make some real money at this drawing thing! **H**

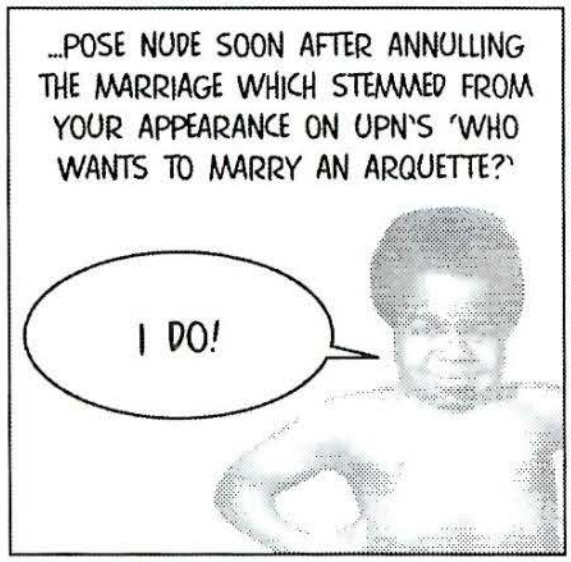
HITCH COMICS

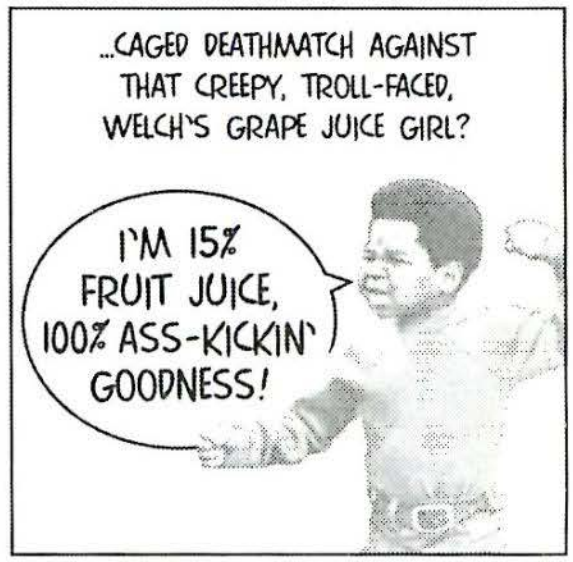
WHAT WON'T GARY COLEMAN DO FOR FIVE BUCKS?

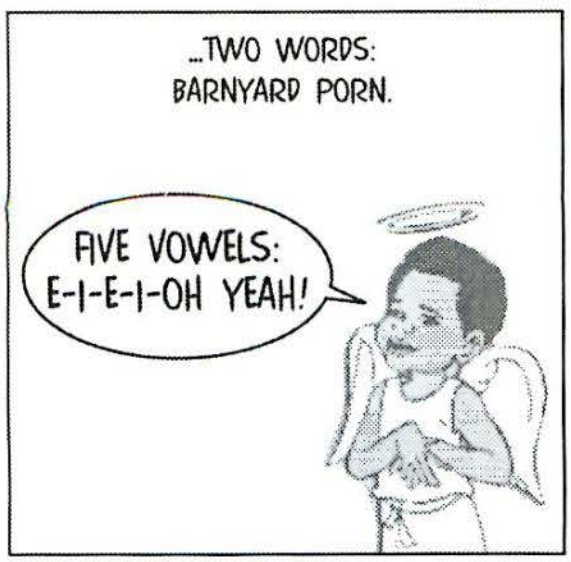
BY BRIAN WINKELER & JOSH UNRUH

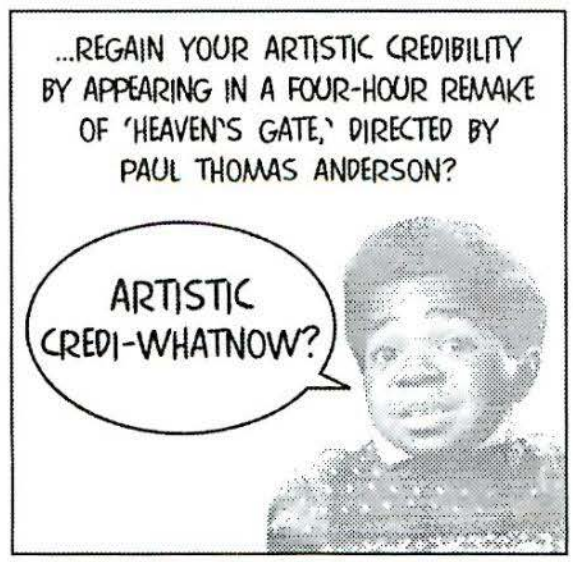

HEY GARY COLEMAN, WOULD YOU... PLAY ELIAN GONZALEZ IN A FOX-TV MOVIE CO-STARRING TRACEY GOLD AS YOUR STRUGGLING, ANOREXIC COUSIN MARISLEYSIS?
¡SI! ES GLORIOSA UNA IDEA!

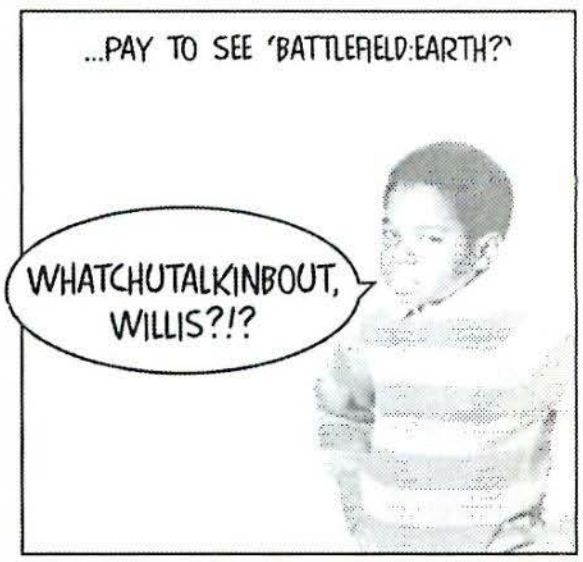

...PORTRAY THE NOBLE BLACK MAN WHO SACRIFICES HIMSELF TO THE ALIEN HORDE, ENSURING THE SAFETY OF THE WHITE PROTAGONISTS IN A MADE-FOR-SCI-FI CHANNEL MOVIE?
WATCH OUT, CHARLES S. DUTTON!


...POSE NUDE SOON AFTER ANNULLING THE MARRIAGE WHICH STEMMED FROM YOUR APPEARANCE ON UPN'S 'WHO WANTS TO MARRY AN ARQUETTE?'
I DO!






...REGAIN YOUR ARTISTIC CREDIBILITY BY APPEARING IN A FOUR-HOUR REMAKE OF 'HEAVEN'S GATE,' DIRECTED BY PAUL THOMAS ANDERSON?
ARTISTIC CREDI-WHATNOW?



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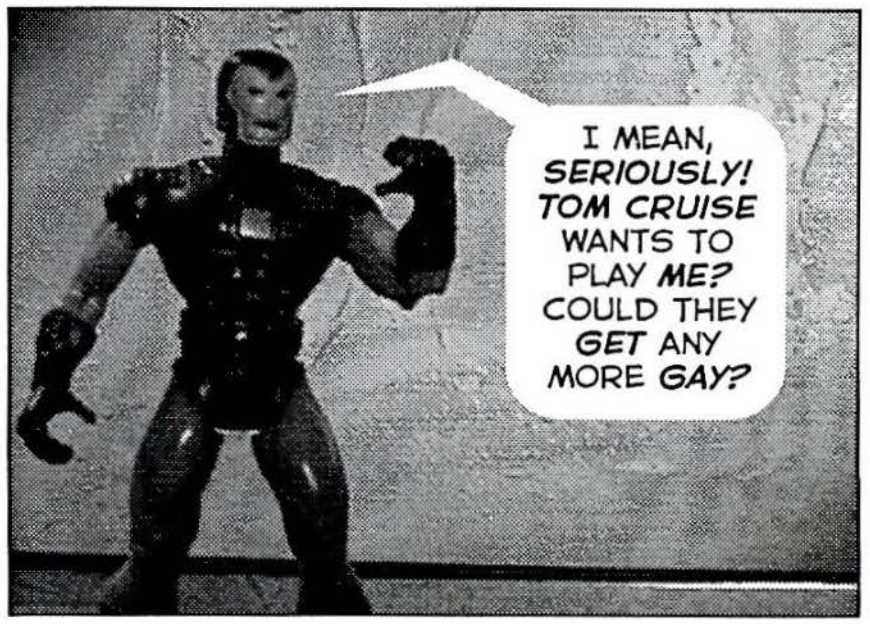
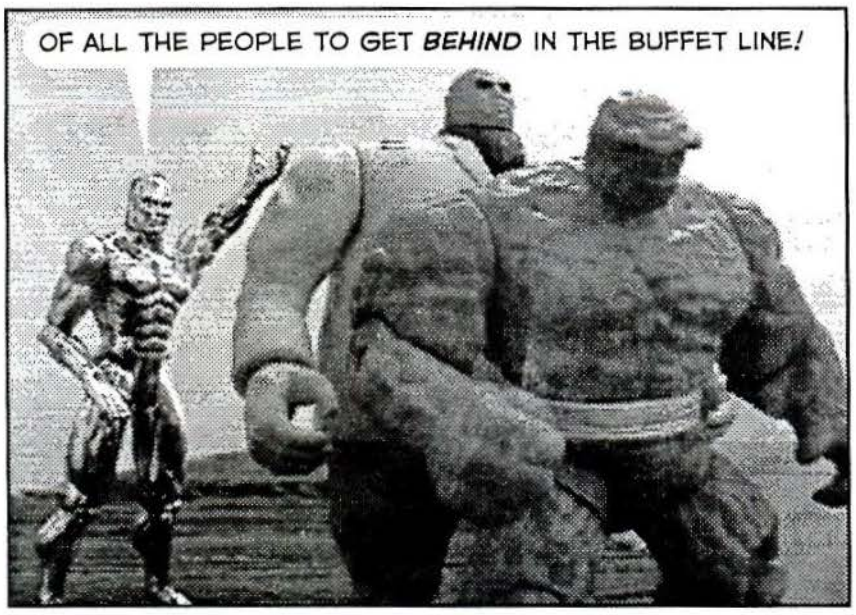
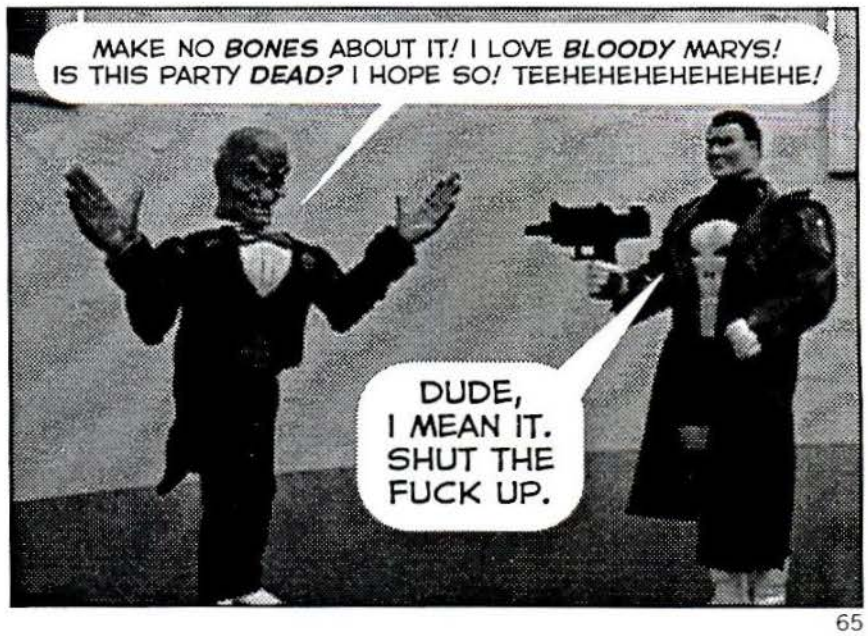
SCENES FROM THE ACTION FIGURE REUNION







CANNIBAL EXCHANGE STUDENT

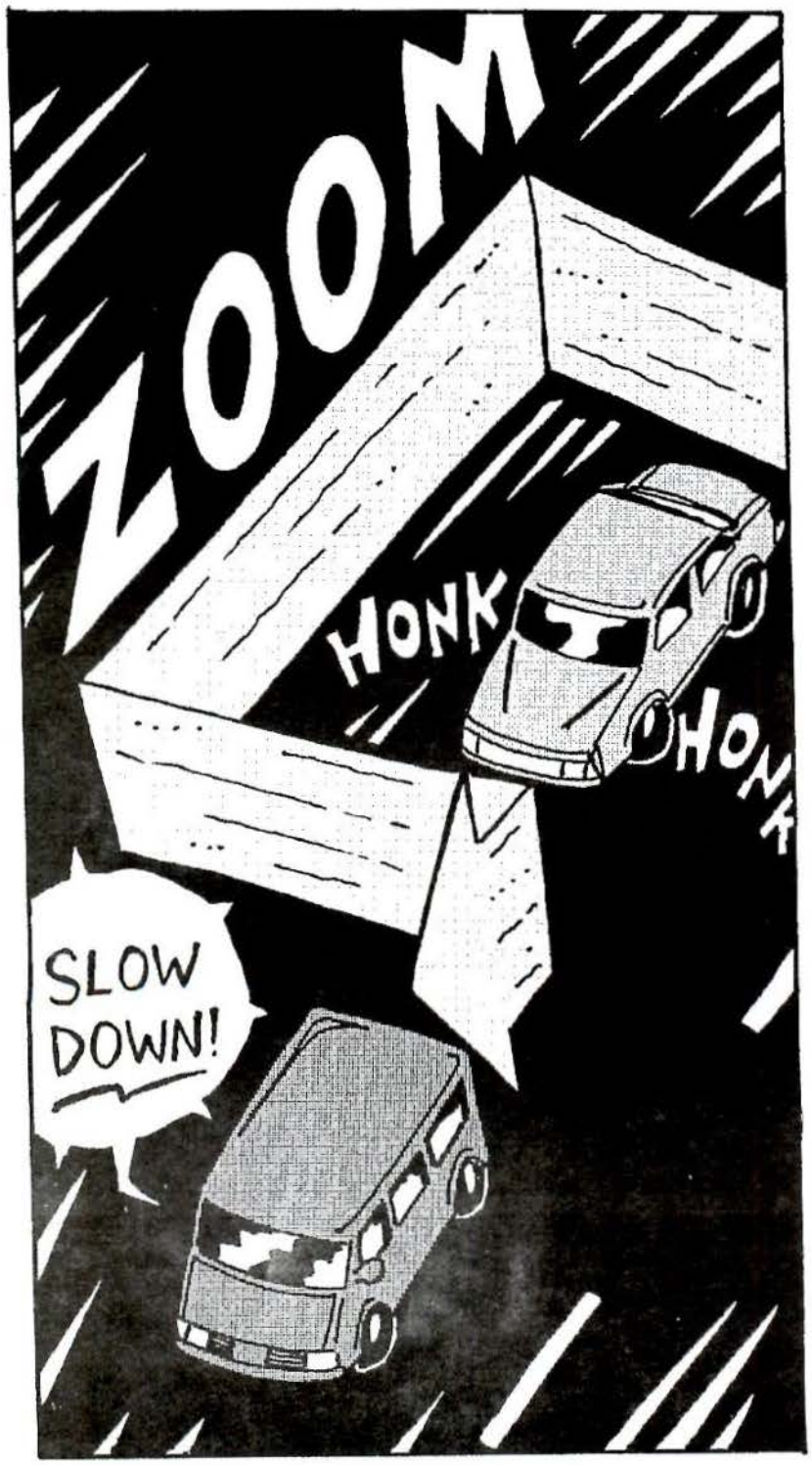
Part One

ZOOOM!

WATCH YOUR SPEED, SWEETHEART!

I'M WATCHING IT!

WHAT TIME IS HIS PLANE SUPPOSED TO BE HERE?
FIVE FIFTEEN.
TIK TIK


ZOOM
HONK
HONK
SLOW DOWN!

REALLY, DAD! IT WON'T KILL HIM TO WAIT AT THE AIRPORT A FEW MINUTES!

I JUST WANT TO BE THERE WHEN HE GETS OFF THE PLANE...
THE UNITED STATES IS GOING TO BE A HUGE SHOCK FOR HIM.

I JUST KNOW HE'S GOING TO BE SOME KIND OF SEX-FREAK OR SERIAL KILLER.

SERIAL KILLERS ARE ALMOST ALWAYS FROM THE U.S., SO I DOUBT YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THAT...

BUT YOU COULD BE RIGHT ABOUT THE SEX-FREAK PART... SO BE SURE TO TELL SOMEONE IF YOUR PANTIES START TO DISAPPEAR.

QUIT TRYING TO SCARE YOUR SISTER!

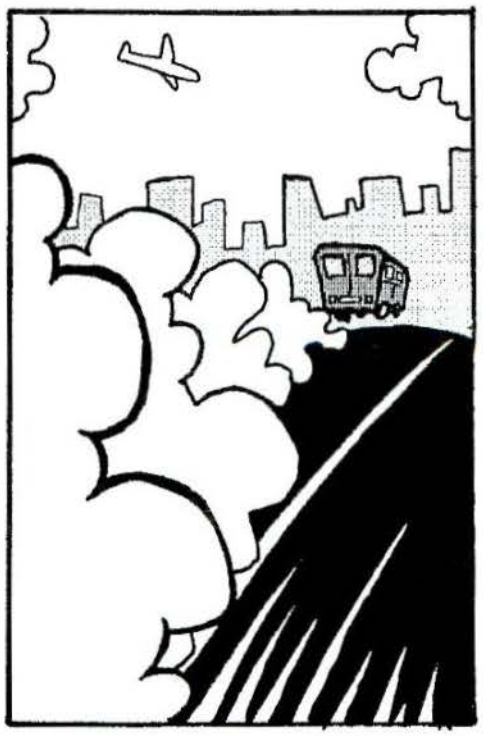
HUH? ME? I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!

I JUST BETTER NOT CATCH HIM SNOOPING AROUND MY STUFF.

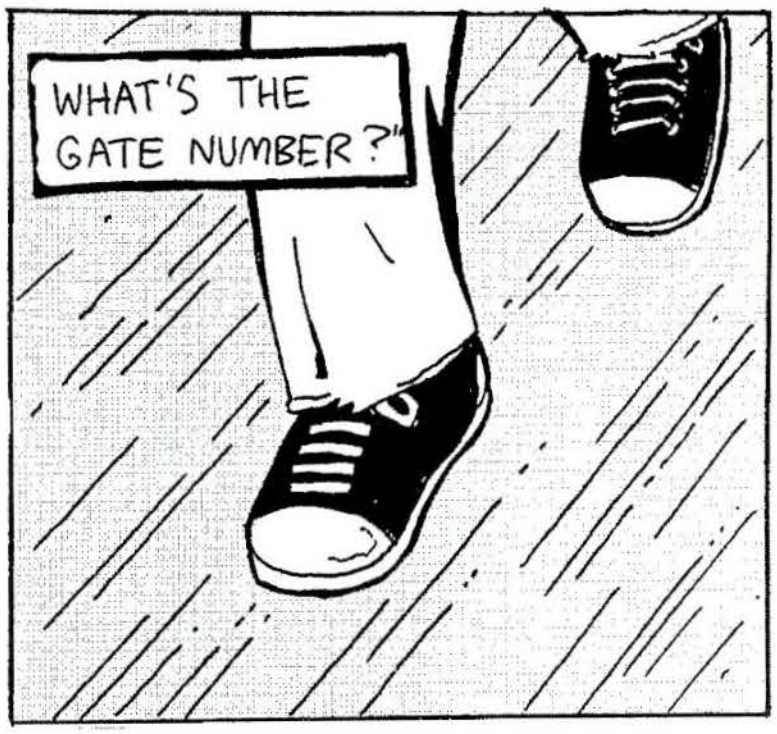
I DON'T SEE WHAT YOU'RE SO MAD ABOUT. I'M THE ONE WHO HAS TO SHARE HIS ROOM.

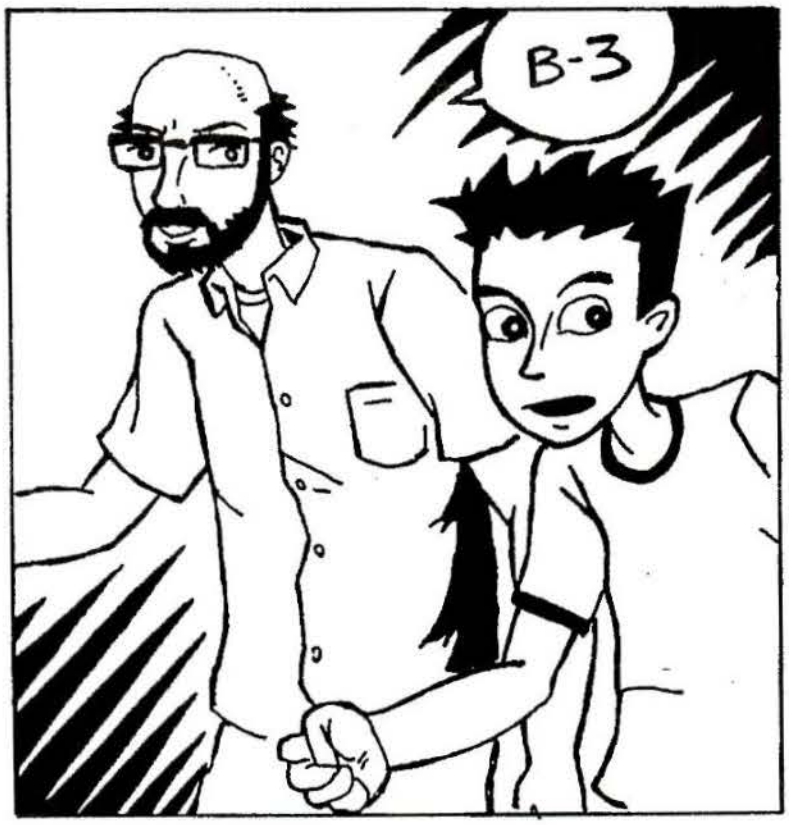
CUT IT OUT! THAT DISCUSSION IS OVER! THIS IS GOING TO BE A GOOD EXPERIENCE FOR BOTH OF YOU!

MAYBE YOU'LL FINALLY REALIZE HOW FORTUNATE YOU ARE.



HREEECHT


WHAT'S THE GATE NUMBER?"


B-3

B3
HERE IT IS!

UH-OH...

AAAA!
RUN!

HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON BACK THERE?
HE'S CRAZY, MAN! YOU GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE!

WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
HIM!

GOONGALA
GOONGALA

?

WHY IS HE STARING AT US?
SHHH! DON'T MAKE ANY SUDDEN MOVES-- HE'S GOT A FORK!

MA-MA!
PA-PA!

THAT'S HIM?
NO WAY!
CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE!

HE'S USELESS AND UNNECESSARY

INTERESTING? NO, HE'S NOT VERY

ONE THING'S FOR SURE, HIS NAME'S NOT LARRY

HE'S RALPH THE APPENDIX!™

BY BRIAN WINKELER

RALPH THE APPENDIX IN:

RADIO DAZE

GRRR...THIS TOP-40 TEENYBOPPER CRAP SUCKS!

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

HMMM... WHAT'S THIS?

COULD IT BE... A NEW MODERN ROCK STATION?

IT ALL SOUNDS SO FAMILIAR, BUT I DON'T THINK I'VE HEARD ANY OF THESE SONGS BEFORE.

...UPLIFTING SONGS WITH ADDICTIVE RHYTHMS...

...VAGUE USE OF MALE PRONOUNS...

...MEN SINGING OF LOVING OTHER MEN WITHOUT THE REQUISITE HOMOEROTIC SUBTEXT...

AAIIIIEE! CHRISTIAN ROCK! CHANGE IT! CHANGE IT!

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

©2000, BRIAN WINKELER

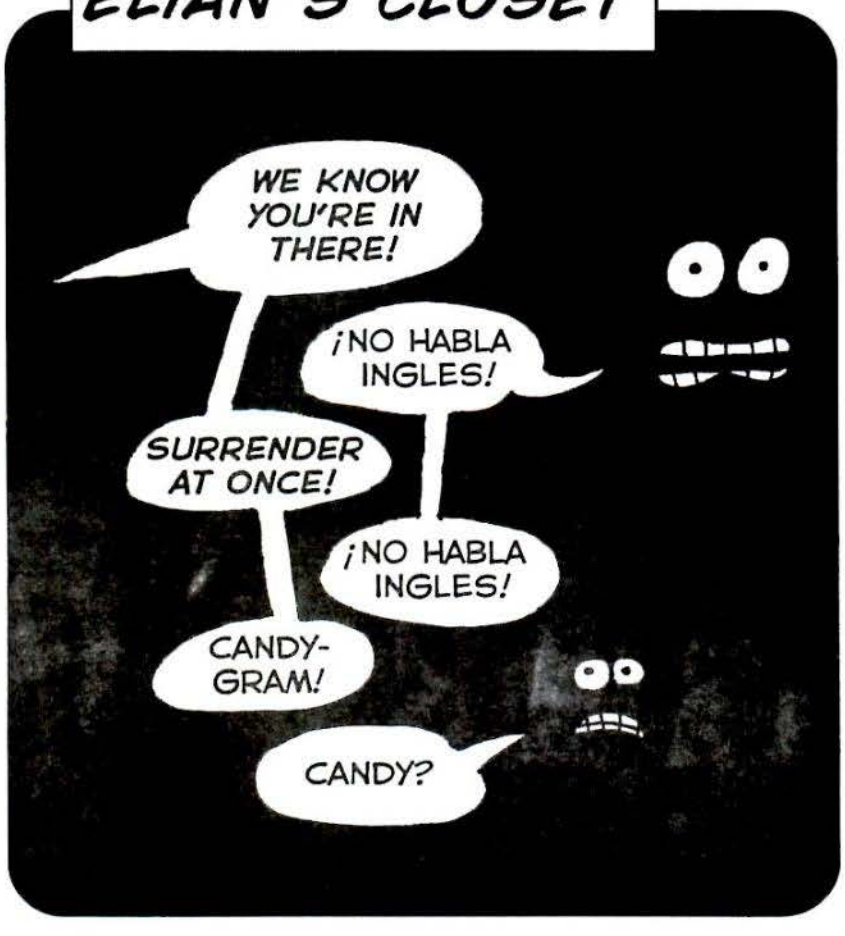
HE'S CONQUERED THE NEWS! NOW GET SET AS
AMERICA'S FAVORITE LITTLE CUBAN BOY CONQUERS PRIMETIME!

elian gonzales: sitcom star

ELIAN'S ISLAND

MY TWO DADS

ELIAN'S CLOSET



I LOVE JANET

BRIEFS, DISPATCHES AND BRIEF DISPATCHES

ROAD TRIP: THE HOME GAME

Recreate the prostate-milking scene in the comfort of your home! To promote the raunchy comedy *Road Trip*, DreamWorks sent critics a most unusual promo item: a sperm collection kit, consisting of a sample cup (sealed, thankfully), a rubber glove, K-Y jelly and, to help things along, a picture depicting a little hot lesbian action.

It sure beats the hell out of a T-shirt. Pun intended.

THE *REVOLUTION* WILL BE PUBLISHED

A revolution is coming this summer for music fans – *Revolution*, that is. Imagine Media, home of such cutting-edge publications as *Mac Addict* and *Business 2.0* is starting up a new monthly dedicated to championing great music, the artists, the culture and the technology that surrounds it.

Revolution aims to be the only resource for the best, most innovative and most important music available – be it on the Internet, in stores on in the clubs.

"*Revolution* is a child of the millennium," said Jonathan Simpson-Bint, the publisher and president of Imagine's entertainment division. "It's a completely fresh take on the idea of a music magazine."

Aside from the usual news and reviews, *Revolution* also comes with – and this we really dig – a free CD collecting the latest and greatest music talked about within the pages, whether that be electronic, urban or new rock.

Even more, each issue compiles another CD for you, but makes you do the work, by listing a dozen or so cool MP3s available for free download off the 'net. They provide you with the cover and track listings – you just do the burning.

THEY MIGHT BE DIGITAL

Working outside the traditional format, cult faves They Might Be Giants just released their second MP3-only album, the EP *Working Undercover for the Man*. To make music fans more familiar with purchasing downloadable music, the first 10,000 customers to purchase the album from Emusic.com will get the CD shipped to them for free.

"As the world moves toward MP3, this will show a lot of people how easy getting their music off the Net really is," said guitarist John Flansburgh. "Once a fan finds out how involved the band is, they don't even want to trade our music illegally."

We recommend the new EP. We also recommend Flansburgh do a quick Internet search of "TMBG MP3s."

A *FEVER* RELAPSE

Two signs that retro-nostalgia is getting a bit out of hand: Novelty acts Buckner & Garcia ("Pac-Man Fever") and Meco ("Star Wars Theme") have released new CDs available *only* on the Internet, presumably because retail outlets aren't fond of stocking items that will not sell.

Like TMBG, neither Meco nor B&G will have to worry about fans trading the music illegally. But that's only because they have no fans.

THE EMPEROR HAS NO MOVIE

Emperor Norton Records' 1999 release of the soundtrack to *Soul Ecstasy* – a 1972 lost blaxploitation classic – was a watershed ... because there was no such film.

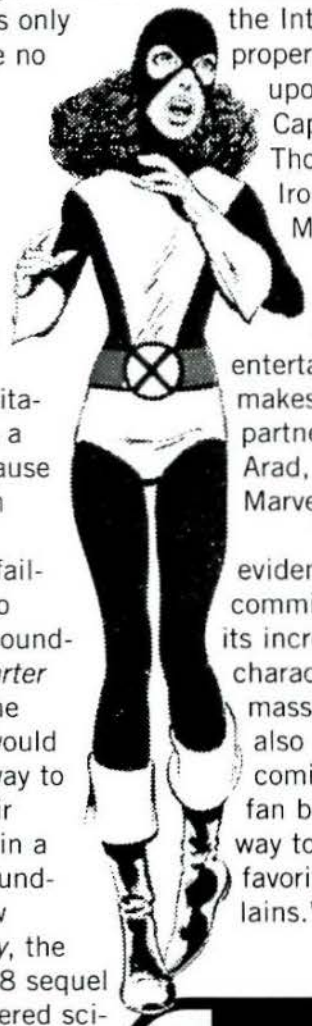
Frustrated by failing to get rights to groovy-sounding soundtracks like *Get Carter* and *Barbarella*, the label decided it would be more fun anyway to simply create their own. The second in a series of "fake soundtracks" is the new *Logan's Sanctuary*, the music to the 1978 sequel to a well-remembered sci-fi thriller.

Ex-Jellyfish and current Moog Cookbook member Roger Manning Jr. is behind most of the *Sanctuary* shenanigans, which is no secret this time around. The *Ecstasy* hoax was shrouded in secrecy; DJ Me DJ You was the culprit.

Next up in the series is perhaps the coolest yet: the 1971 reissue of a Mexican *Planet of the Apes* film soundtrack, due for release in February 2001. We hear a certain Japanese *Apes* afficionado is in talks to do the honors.

MAKE MINE MARVEL

For a team-up most mighty, Marvel Enterprises and Artisan Entertainment are forming a joint venture that will bring many of Marvel's superheroes to life via movies, TV, video and the Internet. Fifteen properties were agreed upon, including Captain America, Thor, Black Panther, Iron Fist and Ant-Man.



"Our brands are synonymous with cutting-edge entertainment, which makes them the perfect partner for us," said Avi Arad, president of Marvel Studios.

"This is further evidence of Marvel's commitment to deliver its incredibly popular character brands to a mass audience while also providing our core comic book and sci-fi fan base with a new way to experience their favorite heroes and villains."

H

FYI

TOP 10 HIGHEST-GROSSING HORROR FRANCHISES

1. *Scream* ($293M, 3 films)
2. *A Nightmare on Elm Street* ($225M, 7 films)
3. *Friday the 13th* ($222M, 9 films)
4. *The Exorcist* ($221M, 3 films)
5. *Halloween* ($187M, 6 films)
6. *Poltergeist* ($132M, 3 films)
7. *I Know What You Did Last Summer* ($113M, 2 films)
8. *Child's Play* ($76M, 4 films)
9. *The Omen* ($70M, 3 films)
10. *Hellraiser* ($38M, 4 films)

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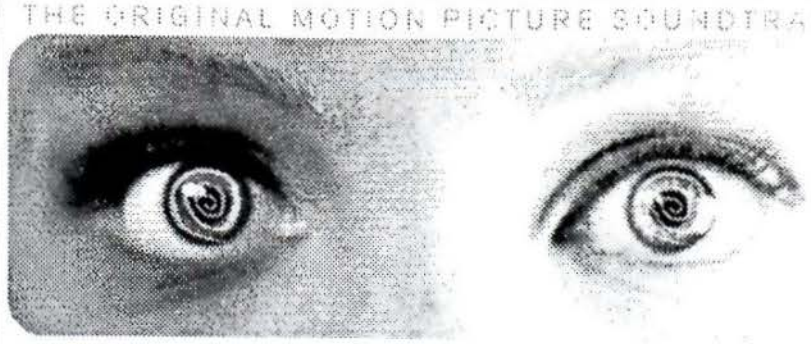
THE ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK



A ROBERT LEE KING FILM

PSYCHO BEACH PARTY

INCLUDES THE HIT SINGLE "Tempest" BY LOS STRAITJACKETS

FEATURING TRACKS FROM

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THE HALIBUTS
THE HILLBILLY SOUL SURFERS
THE FATHOMS
MAN OR ASTRO-MAN?

ORIGINAL SCORE BY BEN VAUGHN

PARTY 'TIL YOU DROP. DEAD.

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IN STORES SEPT 12

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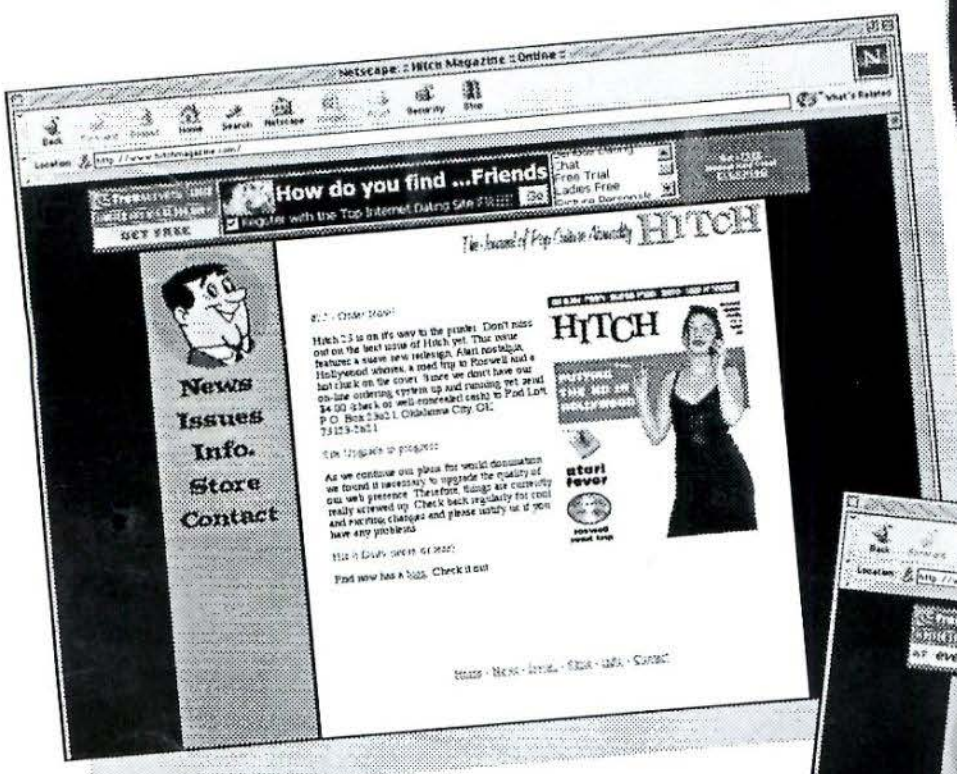
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HITCH
Hitch 2.3 is on it's way to the printer. Don't miss out on the best issue of Hitch yet. This issue features a suave new redesign, Alan nostalgia, Hollywood schemes, a mod trip to Roswell and a hot chick on the cover. Since we don't have our on-line ordering system up and running yet, send $4.00 (check or well-concealed cash) to Rod Lott, P.O. Box 23021, Oklahoma City, OK 73123-2321
As we continue our plans for world domination we found it necessary to upgrade the quality of our web presence. Therefore, things are currently really screwed up. Check back regularly for cool and exciting changes and please notify us if you have any problems.
Find new ink & bits. Check it out!

Now with annoying banner ads!

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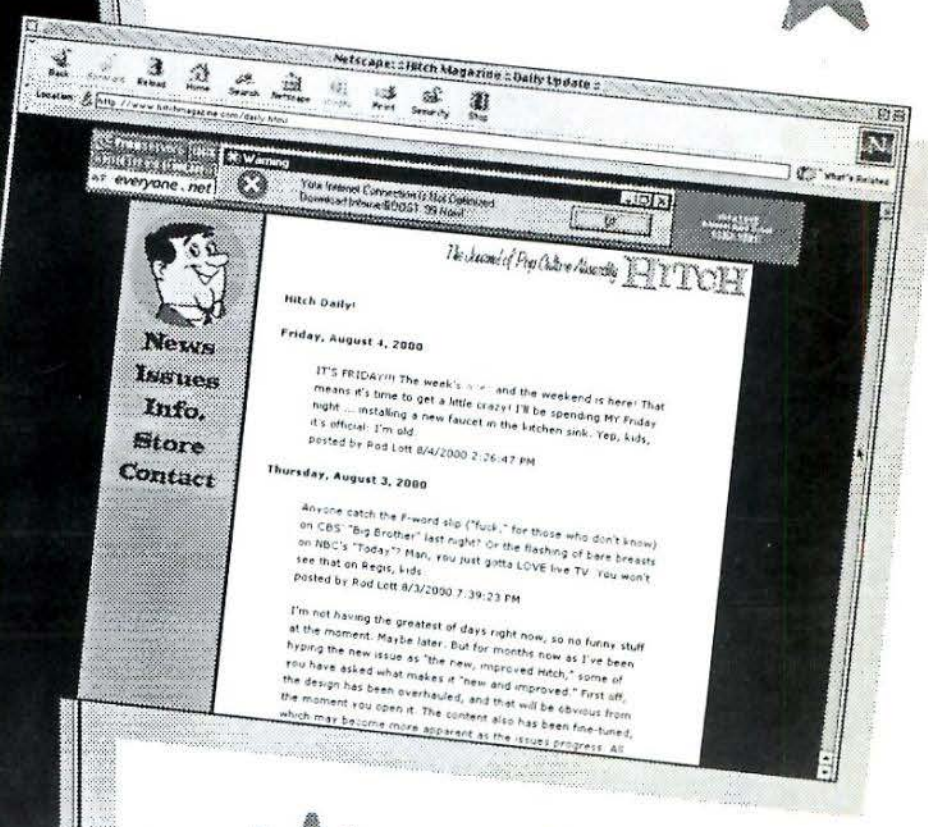
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Hitch Daily!
Friday, August 4, 2000
IT'S FRIDAY!!! The week's over and the weekend is here! That means it's time to get a little crazy! I'll be spending MY Friday night ... installing a new faucet in the kitchen sink. Yep, kids, it's official: I'm old.
posted by Rod Lott 8/4/2000 2:26:47 PM
Thursday, August 3, 2000
Anyone catch the F-word slip ("fuck," for those who don't know) on CBS' "Big Brother" last night? Or the flashing of bare breasts on NBC's "Today"? Man, you just gotta LOVE live TV. You won't see that on Regis, kids.
posted by Rod Lott 8/3/2000 7:39:23 PM
I'm not having the greatest of days right now, so no funny stuff at the moment. Maybe later. But for months now as I've been hyping the new issue as "the new, improved Hitch," some of you have asked what makes it "new and improved." First off, the design has been overhauled, and that will be obvious from the moment you open it. The content also has been fine-tuned, which may become more apparent as the issues progress. All

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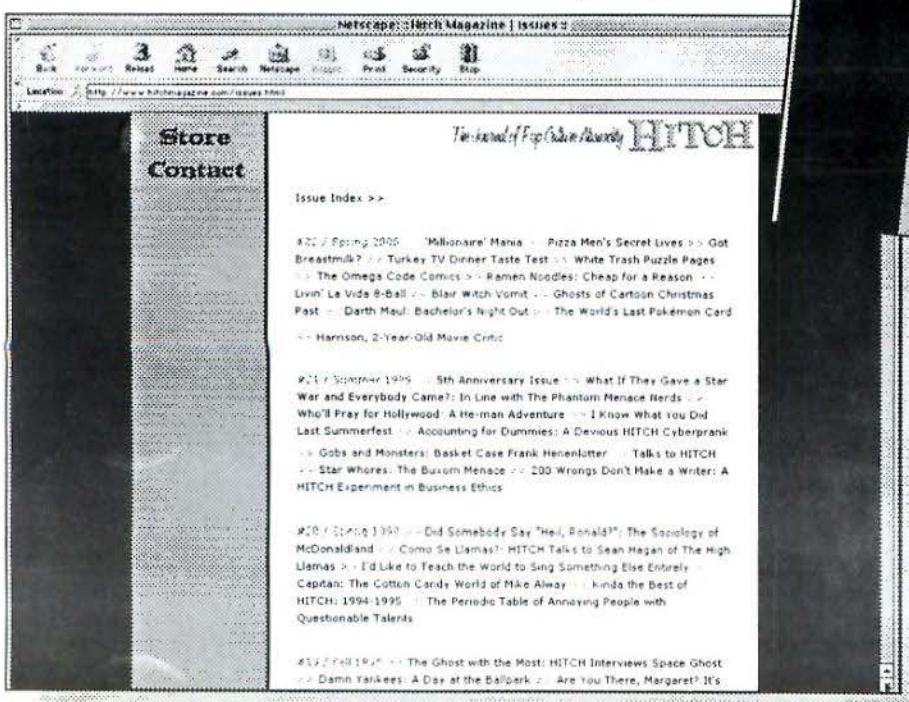
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